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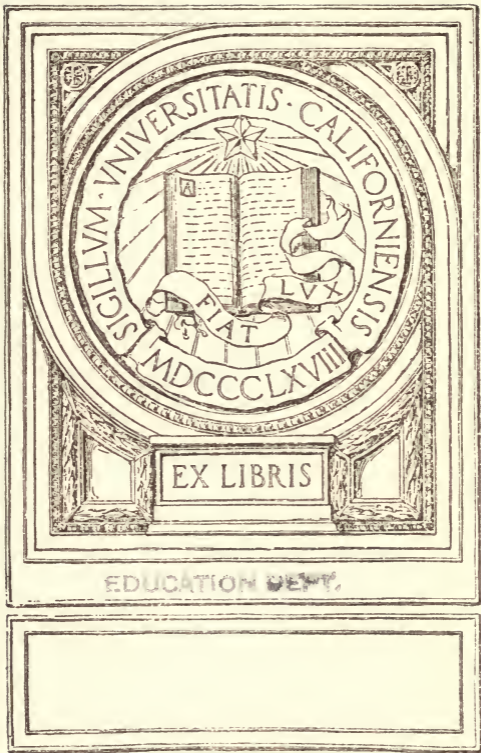
SPEECH ON  
CONCILIATION  
WITH  
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# The Lake English Classics

REVISED EDITION WITH HELPS TO STUDY

## SPEECH ON CONCILIATION WITH AMERICA

BY  
EDMUND BURKE

*With Selections from*

OTHER WRITINGS OF BURKE, SPEECHES BY PITT AND  
FOX, AND EXTRACTS FROM TREVELYAN, LECKY,  
AND THE PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY

EDITED BY  
C. H. WARD

TAFT SCHOOL, WATERTOWN, CONN.

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## PREFACE

If every high-school student knew that the governmental oppression that caused the American Revolution was "made in Germany," our democracy would be more secure. For as long as there lurks in the back of the American consciousness a suspicion of English tyranny in 1775, so long will misunderstanding prevent the English-speaking nations from working in accord to develop Anglo-Saxon freedom. Not until the younger generation has learned to distinguish between the English freedom of 1775 and "the slavery that they may have from Prussia," will America return to that "unsuspecting confidence in the mother country" which is vital to the future progress of democracy throughout the world. To teach that distinction is pre-eminently the task of the schools; on every hand there is a demand that teaching should be more in accord with the great fact of 1775 and that textbooks should bring into relief this truth: The American Revolution was not an attempt of England to tyrannize over colonies, but was a quarrel fomented by a German king as part of his program of despotic ambition.

To some teachers that may sound like an extreme statement adapted to the emotions of a new-found gratitude to England. Yet there is nothing novel or

exaggerated about it. Burke analyzed it completely in his *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*; Green explained it in the plainest terms; Fiske made it obvious; Trevelyan disclosed it fully. And if anyone supposes that these historians were making special pleas for the sake of amity, he may read the most convincing and elaborate of all testimonies in the work of a historian who was not swerved by any such motive—Lecky. There was no English tyranny over America until a German king had tricked his colonists into hating his ministry, until he had created a servile House of Commons, and until he had inflamed against each other his subjects on two sides of the Atlantic.

Burke was not pleading for America against an English Toryism. He voiced the common feeling of Englishmen who had any real ideas about America, of most of the members of Commons who were not hired "king's men." He spoke the common thought of England as it was before public opinion had been poisoned by a Hanoverian. He was pleading the cause of English freedom against a despotism as Hunnish as that which was recently plotted on Wilhelmstrasse. His speech is a revelation of that ideal of democracy—of "Magnanimity as the truest wisdom"—which has guided England, which has guided America, and by which both countries must henceforth be guided in concord if they are to fulfil a useful destiny.

The nature of Burke's plea for conciliation cannot be understood by any amount of study of the speech itself, nor can any mere introduction and notes reveal convincingly the amazing facts of 1775. An under-

standing can be gained only by reading what typical Englishmen said while the American Revolution was being fomented, and by reading the judgments of various historians. This knowledge the ideal teacher seeks and finds by many days of exploration in a library; he sluices tons of irrelevant matter to acquire the precious ounces of information. The ideal teacher does this. The rest of us—if I may judge by my own case—teach what an editor provides, because it seems even more copious than a class has time for. Not till 1917 was I driven to learn more about this “slavery that they may have from Prussia.” The revelation has made the *Conciliation* much more entertaining to me and the students. For now there is a villain in the story, and we learn a very useful truth about English freedom. I feel touched and grieved because editors have never given so much as an inkling of the vital fact. I should suppose that all teachers of Burke would feel the same. This material has not been available to the student, and in many cases not even to the teacher. For the first time it is presented in one handy volume. The Collateral Readings from Burke’s Works and the Speeches of Pitt and Fox, and the extracts from historians are not an appendix; they are illuminating material intended to be read side by side with the Burke.

I hope that the introduction and notes are contrived to make the *Conciliation* appear like the human and interesting document that it is. If that wish seems excessive optimism to those of us who have taught the speech for a decade or two, we should remember

that the current of history now sets our way. For every young American there is now a meaning in Burke that did not exist in 1913. Never did a school classic carry such a present-day message or furnish so definite an answer to a national demand.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Longmans, Green and Co., who kindly gave us permission to use the extracts from *The American Revolution* and *George the Third and Charles Fox* by G. O. Trevelyan.

C. H. WARD.

WATERTOWN, CONN.

December 13, 1918.



## CONTENTS

	PAGE	
INTRODUCTION:		
The German Foe of English Freedom, George III.....	9	
The Champion of English Freedom, Edmund Burke....	22	
The Triumph of German Intrigue in 1775.....	29	
BURKE'S SPEECH ON CONCILIATION WITH AMERICA....	41	
IMPORTANT COLLATERAL READINGS		
I HOW THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION WAS REGARDED IN ENGLAND		
From G. O. Trevelyan's <i>American Revolution</i> ....	129	
II THE POWER OF GEORGE III		
From G. O. Trevelyan's <i>George the Third and Charles Fox</i> .....	146	
From W. E. H. Lecky's <i>A History of England in the Eighteenth Century</i> .....	156	
III SELECTIONS FROM BURKE		
Speech on American Taxation.....	169	
The Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol on the Affairs of America.....	193	
Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents	218	
IV BURKE'S POWER AS AN ORATOR		
Extracts from G. O. Trevelyan's <i>George the Third and Charles Fox</i> .....	237	
V SPEECH OF WILLIAM PITT, THE EARL OF CHATHAM, MOVING THE REMOVAL OF TROOPS FROM BOSTON.		243
VI EXCERPTS FROM THE SPEECHES OF CHARLES JAMES FOX		256
VII EXCERPTS FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY FOR 1775-1776		265

PLAN OF THE SPEECH ON CONCILIATION.....	283
WHERE BURKE SPOKE.....	284
NOTES .....	286
A. BRIEF BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	303
APPENDIX	
Helps to Study.....	304
INDEX .....	311



## INTRODUCTION

An outline of those "amazing facts of 1775," referred to in the next to the last paragraph of the Preface, is given in this Introduction. The student should read also the Collateral Readings, a compact body of extracts from speeches by Burke, Pitt, and Fox, and excerpts from Histories.

### THE GERMAN FOE OF ENGLISH FREEDOM, GEORGE III

The best introduction to Burke's *Conciliation* is a picture of what happened in 1758, about Thanksgiving time, in the wild forest of western Pennsylvania. A stockaded fort named Duquesne, which had been held by the French and Indians, was burned at midnight, and the garrison retreated northward. The next afternoon two regiments of English soldiers, who had been toiling westward since early summer, appeared at the edge of the clearing and viewed the smoking ruins. One of the English colonels was George Washington. He was a British officer leading colonial Englishmen under a general from England. If you had called him an "American," he would have thought you were using a kind of nickname. He and his fellow colonists were proud that they were Englishmen; they gladly and loyally served an English

king because he represented the freedom without which they thought life not worth living.

The capture of Duquesne was a victory near the end of the French and Indian War. This was part of a contest that England carried on for seven years to preserve herself against the two great autocracies of Europe, the Bourbons and the Hapsburgs. Englishmen at home and in the colonies were equally concerned in this struggle to make the world safe for English freedom. No colonist felt secure as long as a Bourbon monarch held the continent to the north and west. The colonists rejoiced in 1763 when England won its long fight, when Canada became an English province, and when their English liberties were safe in the new world. When Fort Duquesne was rebuilt, they named it Pittsburgh in honor of William Pitt<sup>1</sup>, the greatest Englishman of that time, who had done more than any other man to secure the victory in the Seven Years' War. Eight million people in England and two million in the colonies admired him and honored him. Under his leadership the colonists had spent their money and lives to destroy the power of autocracy in the western hemisphere.

Though at this time, as Burke says, "a fierce spirit of liberty was stronger in the English colonies than in any other people of the earth," the colonists felt that they owed their liberty to the English government. Though they could "snuff the approach of tyranny in every tainted breeze," they had no suspicion of the mother country; indeed they felt an "un-

<sup>1</sup>See his speeches in the Collateral Readings, pp. 243-255.

suspecting confidence" in it. They never dreamed of a quarrel with their kindred in England. The foundation of Burke's *Conciliation* is this strong attachment and affection which the colonists felt toward their British empire.

Yet within sixteen years minute-men were organizing at Lexington to meet British regulars, and Burke rose in the House of Commons to plead against civil war. What had brought about this disastrous change? The German king of England, George III. He hated Pitt, hated English freedom, was resolved to be a "real monarch," like the Stuart who had been beheaded. He became as persistent and dangerous an enemy as England ever had. Twenty years after Pitt had raised his country to pre-eminence, George III brought it to shame and the verge of ruin. How a German acquired such power in England is a long and complicated story, but an outline of it can be presented in a few paragraphs.<sup>1</sup> Without this much knowledge of the historical setting Burke's speech has little meaning.

The modern development of English liberties began with the "Great Rebellion," at the end of which the Stuart King, Charles I, was beheaded in 1649. Thirty-nine years later another Stuart king, James II, was deposed in the "Great and Glorious Revolution." But the nation was not prepared for the form of a republic. Public opinion still wished the form of government to be a monarchy under a king who had a legal right to the throne by descent, but who should have

<sup>1</sup>See the Collateral Readings, pp. 146-155.

no power for tyranny. William, the ruler of the Netherlands, was such a man; he signed an agreement that his only right to rule was the will of the people. In 1714 it became necessary to invite another king from abroad. Curiously enough this man was the ruler of the small German state of Hanover. Though he could not speak English, he was invited to become the monarchical figurehead because his grandmother had been a daughter of the first Stuart king; his blood was one-fourth Stuart and three-fourths German. He had small power in English politics; his only hope of security was in the great Whig leaders who had managed the Revolution and were opposed to Stuart tyranny. A group of these Whigs—able and patriotic men—formed a kind of committee of management of English affairs. The Tory supporters of the Stuarts were driven utterly out of power; a thoroughly Whig House of Commons was elected; the government was carried on by a Whig “cabinet,” or ministry.

The cabinet had to see to it that the Tories remained in a very small minority, for there was real danger of an attempt to restore the Stuarts. So they bought enough seats for their purpose. For more than twenty years one Whig leader, Robert Walpole, controlled—practically had in his pocket—two-thirds of the membership. Walpole was the real executive of the nation. His official position was that of “prime minister.” In the system of government that developed while he was in power a prime minister was appointed by the king; he was empowered to “form a ministry”—that is, to select a dozen leaders from the houses of Com-

mons and Lords who would serve as an executive committee for managing the kingdom. Naturally they had to be chosen largely from the party that was in the majority, for it was their business to shape legislation and to direct national affairs. (The minority was called the "opposition.") If the ministry had betrayed its trust, or if it had tried to lead where the party would not follow, it would have made itself useless; for it could not have managed the government if the majority was against it. Or if the king had appointed a prime minister who was opposed by the majority, the king would have been powerless to enforce his policies. Thus the ministry became the regulator of the machinery of government. It could continue in office as long as it could command a majority; if opposed by a majority, it had to resign, and the king had to appoint a new minister. Walpole had to resign when Commons wished a war to which he was opposed. He was followed by the Duke of Newcastle, who also was an unblushing owner of two-thirds of the seats. When the Seven Years' War began, in 1756, Pitt was the real leader of the nation; he was naturally made prime minister. But he controlled no votes and would have been helpless if he had not combined his lofty energies with Newcastle's political machine.

This method of governing by a ministry kept George I from exercising any kingly power. George II, who was one-eighth more German than his father and who had never seen England till he was thirty-one years old, was also obliged to be a figurehead. He hated the



great Pitt and cared more for his native Hanover than for England; but his German "will to power" was helpless.

His grandson, George III, was the next king. He was a tall, ruddy man, with a retreating chin and a narrow forehead, who talked very rapidly and had a habit of adding a sharp "what?" to the end of his numerous questions. His mind was also narrow, but he had a retentive memory for petty things. He had considerable skill in the tricks of kingcraft and was courageous in the face of danger. He was intensely religious and lived a rigorous and frugal life. He was the only one of the five Hanoverian kings of England whose life was clean. But his very morality made him more dangerous<sup>1</sup> than if he had been idle or dissipated.

Though he had been born in England and had the speech and manners of an Englishman, his blood was 31/32 German; and when he came to the throne in 1760, he showed a genuine Teutonic lust for power and detestation of liberty. He had also the German gift for hating—had hated his grandfather, hated his son, hated Pitt and all the Whigs, hated the mere sound of "freedom." Methodically and relentlessly he set about gaining control of the government. To know how he worked and how far he had succeeded by 1775 is to understand the background of Burke's speech.

Perfect control of the government could be gained by the king if he could get control of the House of

<sup>1</sup>See the Collateral Readings, pp. 156-168.

Commons. This corresponded in a way to our House of Representatives, but with a great difference: its members were not elected by a general vote of the people. In choosing representatives for the counties and cities there were real contests between candidates, real elections. But the right to vote was very limited: in the whole country there were only 160,000 men who had the suffrage. More than two-thirds of the members were not elected at all; they were appointed by men who owned the "seats" as so many pieces of property. When the historian Gibbon, for example, wished to sit in Commons, he bought his seat as naturally and as frankly as if he were bargaining for a house; his uncle had inherited as part of his estate the right to name two members. Thus anyone might hope to control Commons if he could buy enough seats and fill them with men who would be loyal to him.

When George III became king in 1760, he at first tried to manage Parliament through a minister who was an out-and-out favorite and servile Tory. But the country showed such a fury of scorn for this creature (Bute) that the king had to go to work another way. He set himself patiently and craftily at the long task of building up the kind of control that Walpole and Newcastle had wielded. Thus the great Whig engine that had been devised to keep tyranny down was now to be applied to put English freedom down. The king spent for the purchase of seats and for bribery<sup>1</sup> more than his income of \$4,000,000 a year; here and there and everywhere he got control of patronage;

<sup>1</sup>See the Collateral Readings, pp. 150-155, and 165-168.

he diverted public funds to buying support; he kept records and scanned lists as if his life depended on it. When his second minister was voted out after two years, he tried another. In six years he made six ministries. He stirred up quarrels among the Whigs; he richly rewarded any who would be subservient and tried to make life unbearable for those who stood out against him; he welcomed one after another those Tories, who had so long lived in disgruntled retirement, and who were now astonished and gratified to find that this "Whig importation" of a king was a monarch after their own hearts. When he was forced to make Pitt prime minister, he thwarted him as far as he could. He was resolved to bend Englishmen to his will—at home by political control and in the colonies by a new system of taxation. For his prime purpose in coercing the colonies was not to get money, but to get obedience, to make their government less democratic. After ten years of shrewd and unremitting exertion he triumphed at home. He had built up a control of Commons more absolute than Walpole's.

How deadly an attack this was upon English freedom may be judged by a pamphlet that Burke wrote in 1770, called *Thoughts Upon the Cause of the Present Discontents*.<sup>1</sup> In that chaos of shifting enmities it was hard to see the one cause. Even now, after historians have been explaining for a century, we find an ordinary account of the politics of that period a mazy confusion. Burke dissected out the one simple cause, traced its ramifications, and displayed it clearly: the

<sup>1</sup>See pp. 218-236.



ambition of the crown to destroy the liberties of the people. Though his style is measured and careful, he uses such expressions as these: "Our freedom is at stake." "Parliament will become the mere appendage and support of the arbitrary power of the crown." "The result of the court's purposes will be that the sword will govern us." "The ministry has become a garrison of 'king's men' to enslave us." "This court faction pursues a scheme for undermining all the foundations of our freedom." "If the power of the court is not checked, we must be hurried into all the rage of civil violence, or sink into the dead repose of despotism." Such statements might be called ranting if they had been made by a colonist or an ordinary politician, but they were made by Burke in a statesman's analysis.

In Burke's *American Taxation*<sup>1</sup> (delivered in 1774) he is outspoken and bitter against the King, the King's ministry, the King's "men," the King's treachery, the King's scheme for fomenting discord between the colonists and the House of Commons. When he spoke on conciliation in 1775, his convictions were even more profound and bitter—as we know from remarks quoted in the *Parliamentary History* for January, February, and March. But this bitterness is hardly allowed to appear. Apparently he designed to have the whole tone of his speech conciliatory; he wished to be as winning and persuasive as possible in such a crisis, not to disturb his serious plea by wrangling or accusation. To be sure there is some sarcasm, yet his

<sup>1</sup>See pp. 169-193.

listeners must have been much more impressed by his temperate tone; to them the contrast was the most striking proof of Burke's earnestness in pleading for conciliation.

This contrast is lost upon a reader who does not know about the violent denunciations of the North ministry that were usual<sup>1</sup> in Commons at that time. This detestation of the King's methods of creating rebellion is the background of the *Conciliation*. On January 19 Burke was "sorry to hear how knavish the noble lord has been," and kept the House in a continual roar of laughter by his attack on North. On January 24: "I will not trouble the noble lord to walk out every five minutes to inter petitions in his cemetery of oblivion." And Fox charged North with "the most unexampled treachery and falsehood." On February 13 Temple Luttrell said: "It is by the German policy of dominion that British America is to be reduced to vassalage. But let the all-potent minions beware lest while they are bowing the stubborn necks of these colonists to the yoke they find not their own necks bow to the block of an executioner." On February 20 Burke said that North's project was "oppressive, absurd, like the tyranny of Nebuchadnezzar." On February 24 he declared that the Penal Bill "tells the starving Americans that they may poke in the brooks and rake in the puddles." He spoke so hotly that he was called to order by the chair. On March 15 he spoke of North's "ruinous and mad career of violence."

<sup>1</sup>See the Collateral Readings, pp. 265-282.

All through the session the House had been kept in ignorance of how many troops were being sent against the colonies and of what military steps were being taken. To this dastardly scheming the opposition had continually objected. North said that Fox<sup>1</sup> and Burke "constantly made a point, not only of attacking, but of threatening me." On Feb. 2 Dunning went so far as to say: "I insist that every appearance of riot and sedition which the noble lord has so faithfully recounted arises not from disobedience or rebellion, but is created by the conduct of those who are anxious to establish despotism, and whose views are manifestly directed to reduce America to the most abject state of servility, as a prelude to realizing the same wicked system in the mother country." On February 6 Lord Irnham said: "The making of our Prince [George III] absolute and despotic over all his vast American dominions may prove ruinous to our liberty, property, and every civil right"; and he called the King's men "a contemptible collection of servile courtiers, renegade Whigs, and fawning, bigoted Tories." In the House of Lords the Duke of Manchester, in a "moderate and pathetic" speech, foretold "a civil war which I fear will terminate in the inevitable destruction of the whole empire."<sup>2</sup>

The responsibility for this attack upon English freedom was not charged against North or the servile Tories. Governor Johnstone said on February 6: "I

<sup>1</sup>See the Collateral Readings, pp. 256-264.

<sup>2</sup>For further examples see Excerpts from *Parliamentary History*, pp. 265-282.

perceive from the noble lord's faint manner of stating his propositions that they are not the dictates of his own mind, and that they are forced on him"—that is, by the King. Burke said (December 16) of the King's speech from the throne, "It breathed nothing but war." After war had begun Burke vented his feelings in sentences like these: "War is at present carried on by the King's natural and foreign troops on one side, and the English in America on the other." "It tends to make an eternal rent and schism in the British nation." "The affection of the Americans is a thousand times more worth to us than the mercenary zeal of all the circles of Germany."<sup>1</sup>

It was against this evil Hanoverian policy of domination and frightfulness that Burke made his vain plea for conciliation, picturing with prophetic wisdom the power of affection, of love for English liberties.

Americans nowadays may suppose that Burke and his colleagues overrated the power of a German king and exaggerated the danger to English freedom.<sup>2</sup> But that danger was quite as great as Burke pictured it. A modern historian, Lecky, thus describes it: "The period of the accession of George III was exceedingly propitious to his design, which was in many respects more plausible than is now generally admitted. . . .

<sup>1</sup>See *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol*, pp. 193-217.

<sup>2</sup>For an illuminating and stimulating summary of the nature of this contest for freedom in the eighteenth century see Edwin Greenlaw's *Builders of Democracy* (Scott, Foresman and Company), Part Two, Section XI.

About the year 1770 there was grave danger that the Crown would regain all, or nearly all, the power it had lost by the Revolution. . . . In the early years of his reign representative institutions were the rare exception, and the influence of foreign example and opinion was almost wholly on the side of despotism. Europe was strewn with the wrecks of the liberties of the past. All the greatest states, all the rising and most vigorous powers, were despotic, and the few remaining sparks of liberty seemed flickering in the socket. The prospects of liberty were very gloomy; and during the American War it was the strong belief of the chief Whig politicians that the defeat of the Americans would probably be followed by a subversion of the Constitution of England. . . . He inflicted more profound and enduring injuries upon his country than any other modern English king. Resolved at all hazards to compel his ministers to adopt his own views, he espoused with passionate eagerness the American quarrel, resisted obstinately the measures of conciliation by which it might easily have been stifled, envenomed it by his glaring partisanship, and protracted it for several years in opposition to the advice of his own favorite minister.”<sup>1</sup>

It is no wonder that Burke called the American question “an awful subject,” that North called it “a matter of the greatest magnitude ever debated within these walls,” that Burgoyne called it “an unparalleled moment in English history.”

<sup>1</sup>See Extracts from Lecky, pp. 156-168.



THE CHAMPION OF ENGLISH FREEDOM,  
EDMUND BURKE

The most unrelenting opponent of the German king was Edmund Burke. He was not a superman like the elder Pitt; he had no such strength in practical statesmanship as the younger Pitt; nor is he endeared to us by any romance of life or splendor of career. But he has commanded the respect—we may even say the awe—of posterity by the grandeur and honest wisdom of his speeches. He was the propagator of that peculiarly English idea that “magnanimity is the truest wisdom.” His greatest illustration of this principle is his *Speech on Conciliation with America*, delivered in Commons about a month before the battle of Lexington. This will seem much more alive to a modern reader if he has in mind a sketch of Burke's career.

Edmund Burke was an Irishman born in Dublin, in 1729. His father (a lawyer) was a Protestant; his mother and wife were Catholics; and the teacher who profoundly influenced him was a Quaker. Hence he learned a sympathy with different religious beliefs. And in most other matters his knowledge was broad and many-sided. At Dublin University, which he entered before he was fifteen, he eagerly read many kinds of books. When at the age of twenty-one his father sent him to study law in London, he devoted much of his time to philosophy. He wrote a philosophical analysis of the nature of “The Sublime and Beautiful,” and was a keen critic of art. He enjoyed

the theater, wrote a brief history of England, composed some verse, traveled a good deal, and had a plan to visit the American colonies.

In them he had always felt a special interest; he published a history and description of them as early as 1757, and was always adding to his vast store of information about them. This consisted of much more than facts. His imagination was forever amplifying a vivid picture of that distant and important people. In his mind he could see them and feel with them. Six years before he entered Parliament he began to edit the *Annual Register*, a handbook of general information like the *Statesman's Year Book*. He familiarized himself in a marvelous way with all the ins and outs of complicated government policies: his brain became a kind of library and picture gallery of all that Parliament and the ministries had done.

He had a gift for friendship. The most famous actor of the day liked him; the most learned and witty woman of the day was attracted by him; the greatest painter loved him all his life and called him "the best judge of a picture I ever knew"; Dr. Johnson, though entirely opposed to Burke's politics, always admired and esteemed him. "If," said Johnson, "a man were to go by chance at the same time with Burke under a shed to shun a shower, he would say, 'This is an extraordinary man.'" When Johnson was on his deathbed, he was glad to have Burke beside him.

The impression of "extraordinary" was made upon all who met him. In spite of his unassuming and friendly manner he impressed people with the sense

of force and genius. "His figure," says Fanny Burney, "is noble; his air commanding; his address graceful; his voice clear, sonorous, powerful; his manners attractive; his conversation past all praise."

As early as 1759 he was recognized as having "a most extensive knowledge, with extraordinary talents for public business," and became secretary to a prominent member of Commons. In this position he became acquainted with other members, who foresaw that the nation would have need of him. So much did the fame of his talents increase that the Marquis of Rockingham, who formed a ministry in 1765, employed him as a confidential adviser. The Marquis needed the counsel of someone who understood America. For the Stamp Act, which had been put through Parliament by a ministry of "king's men," had been received in the colonies with an outburst of rebellious indignation; no stamps could be sold, no legal business transacted; the home government had been defied. Rockingham's new ministry, which really represented the public opinion of England, decided that the Stamp Act must be repealed. Rockingham began to muster his forces and lay his plans. One of his moves was to secure a seat in Commons for Burke, who made his maiden speech on January 27, 1766, arguing that the petition from the colonial congress should be received. So successful was he that the great Pitt declared: "The young member has anticipated me with such ingenuity and eloquence that there is little left for me to say." Within a few weeks Burke had taken a foremost place in the House.



Yet he had certain marked defects as an orator. He was careless in dress, rather awkward in manner, and spoke very rapidly with a strong Irish accent. He was too fond of philosophizing and too fond of speaking at great length—once imposing upon a weary House a five-hour speech that began late at night. He was, however, the leading oratorical genius of the House. Horace Walpole said: "His wit excited the warmest and most continued burst of laughter, even from Lord North."<sup>1</sup> Gov. Johnstone testified of one powerful speech: "If strangers had been admitted, Burke would have excited them to tear the ministers to pieces."<sup>1</sup> The Duc de Levis declared: "Never was the electric power of eloquence more imperiously felt. I have witnessed many scenes where eloquence performed a noble part, but the whole of them appeared insipid when compared with this amazing effort."<sup>1</sup> Morley says of his impeachment of Hastings: "He spoke with such a pitch of eloquence and passion that every listener, including the great criminal, held his breath in an agony of horror." He had such marvelous command of his thoughts and language that even his extempore remarks were as finished in form and as readily uttered as his prepared speeches. He did not write out what he proposed to say, but simply planned the order of ideas and illustrations, and then spoke as the spirit of his eloquence moved him. Hence we have no verbatim report of any of his speeches; most of them were never recorded. In only half a dozen

<sup>1</sup>Quoted by Lecky. See the Burke's Power as an Orator, pp. 237-242.

cases, when he had been urged to preserve what he had spoken, did he write but his speeches after their delivery—relying on his notes, his memory, and his friends' memories. Yet we know that these written forms were very closely like what he had said; this *Conciliation*, for example, sounds like the natural flow of talking rather than like his systematic essays.

For thirty years he was an ardent force in Parliament, becoming the leader and manager of the Whigs who insistently opposed the influence of the court; he outlined policies, spurred his colleagues to their duty, furnished arguments, and delivered speeches that gave him the rank of the greatest orator that England ever produced. Nevertheless, this long career of diligent patriotism was a series of disappointments and hardships. Only twice could he feel the pleasure of direct victory; after that auspicious beginning he was always (except for a few months) "voting with a dispirited minority"; because he had no aristocratic family connections and because he was a difficult man to collaborate with, he was never given any prominent office; he was always looking in vain for the reward of his useful genius; he was always poor and in debt; he was forever persecuted by scandalous stories that he was a Jesuit plotter, a dishonest speculator; during a period of eight years, late in life, he was so disappointed and bitter and imprudent that he was frequently jeered when he rose to speak.

This portion of failure, however, is no more than the share that enters many great lives, even of such men as Washington and Lincoln. From year to year

they seem to be hacking at various foes in an arena; they do not live to see the outcome of the whole battle. In the case of Burke the trial of Warren Hastings is typical of his whole life. For fourteen years Burke planned and conducted that most spectacular and long-drawn-out impeachment in history. With passionate energy he dramatized the wrongs and brutalities committed by Hastings in gaining the empire of India; with all his art and all his vast knowledge he pressed the indictment. Yet Hastings was acquitted. So Burke had labored in vain? He may have felt so. But the indirect result of all his zeal was to make colonial brutality impossible for England in the future; he set up a standard of generous dealing with dependencies, and so added incalculably to the strength of the great fabric of the British empire and to the world's conception of justice. So in other respects his career, when seen in the perspective of history, appears like a solid monument of usefulness and success.

Burke's achievements are not so attractive to American eyes as the splendor of Pitt's fame. They shine less brightly because Burke was a conservative. Brilliant schemes and hopes of reform do not glitter in his record, nor does he ever dazzle us with projects for revolutionizing society. He was too wise for that. His sure instinct taught him that mankind can be improved only by slow experience, by careful adjustment to each necessity as it arises. He wisely mistrusted mere experiment, for he knew that English freedom had never been advanced by experiment. His wisdom clearly saw the danger of tampering with the Consti-

tution on the basis of mere theory; he knew that the chances of doing harm in that way were very great. In this he was like Washington, who wrote in the year before Burke died these solemn words about preserving liberty: "Resist the spirit of innovation upon the authority of government. Remember that time and habit are necessary to fix the true forms of government. Experience is the surest standard." Burke's wisdom was of a piece with Washington's. His sagacity, just like Washington's, foresaw the evils of the French Revolution. When Englishmen and Americans alike were hailing with joy the fall of the Bastille in 1789, Burke and Washington suspected the evils that were to follow—the butchery and the rise of a despotism. If we wish that he had been more of a prophet of the liberty that was having such a terrible birth, we must remember that thirty years after he was dead our own Daniel Webster was still lamenting at Bunker Hill "the conflagration and terror" which the French Revolution spread in the world.

It was unfailing sagacity that ennobled Burke's oratory. All his structures were built on the enduring foundations of a true knowledge of how social forces act. Every resolution that he opposed was at the time unwise; every measure that he fought for has been shown by history to be wise. He was right in his idea of treating Catholics and non-conformists more leniently, of reforming Parliament, of giving the demagogue Wilkes his seat, of abolishing brutal punishments for crime, of stopping the slave trade, of being humane in India. And he was unfailingly wise in his

ideas about the colonies. With breadth of vision and warmth of deep feeling he foresaw the truth about empire that was hidden from most of his contemporaries: "My trust is in their interest in the British Constitution." This faith for which he pleaded so vainly in 1775 was richly verified by Canada and New Zealand and Australia and South Africa and India in 1914, when England began the struggle against "that slavery which they may have from Prussia."

#### THE TRIUMPH OF GERMAN INTRIGUE IN 1775

In 1756 England began the Seven Years' War—a fight for life against the autocracy of France and Austria. The colonial Englishmen went into the war heart and soul, contributing men and money beyond their means, fighting under the leadership of generals from England. At this time Washington, Gates, and Putnam got their training. By 1759, when Quebec was taken, the power of autocracy was dead in the western hemisphere. The result among the colonists was to make them feel more independent, for they no longer needed the protection of the mother country. England was victorious in 1763. But she had spent such vast sums of money that she was in financial straits and needed revenue. A very natural way of adding to her income was to tax the colonies.

This was an entirely new policy. Up to that year all income from the colonies had been obtained in an entirely different way—by trade laws. The nature of these was to "restrain" (i. e., to limit) colonial commerce to English ports: most exports had to be



shipped to England, most imports had to come from England, and the demand for English goods was maintained by forbidding much manufacture in the colonies. Thus the trade laws were not a form of taxation, but they increased England's wealth by increasing her commerce. With this "restraint" the colonies had always been familiar. Although they had chafed and grumbled at times, had smuggled on a grand scale, and were resentful when trade laws were stringently enforced, their resentment was never serious. The Congress of 1774 formally pledged obedience to "such acts as are *bona fide* restrained to the regulation of our external commerce."

But taxation by revenue laws was an entirely different matter. The instant a revenue tax was proposed the colonies "snuffed the approach of tyranny." And their nostrils did not deceive them. If they could have looked into the King's mind, they would have seen that he cared less about an income than about his royal prerogative. He and his creature Bute devised a scheme of taxing Americans. They secured the assistance of Grenville, an honest and industrious man, but a Tory and a fool, despised by Pitt, who nicknamed him the "gentle shepherd." His small equipment of common-sense may be gauged by his announcement that he entered the ministry "to secure the King from falling into the hands of the Whigs!" It is easy to guess how such a person was manipulated by a crafty king until he believed in all honesty that the colonies should be taxed. Shrewd, practical statesmen like Walpole and Pitt had declined to engage in

such folly, but Grenville was zealous for it. He introduced plans for getting revenue from the colonies. In 1763 he enforced with exasperating suddenness those trade laws that had never before been enforced strictly; he proposed a scheme of taxation; and in order to make sure of obedience he proposed to quarter troops on the colonists. In 1765 he secured the passage of the Stamp Act, a measure providing that all legal documents and newspapers must be printed on special stamped paper. His purpose was quite honest; his measures were normal methods of finance and were passed with few dissenting votes. But it is significant that Col. Barré (a huge, scarred, swarthy soldier who had fought at Quebec and who knew something about American fighters) denounced the Act. Where this warrior feared to tread, the "gentle shepherd" rushed confidently in, arguing that taxes had been much increased in England and that it was natural to require the colonies to bear their share in paying the expenses of the war that had resulted so profitably to them. He had consulted the colonial agents about his measure and had postponed it a year while waiting for suggestions of some better way. Few people in England suspected that there was anything momentous about the Stamp Act. Even Burke, who heard the debate from the visitors' gallery, probably expected no hideous harm.

But so violent and complete was the colonial hostility that in 1766 the Act was repealed under the anti-king ministry of Rockingham. The King was then obliged to make Pitt prime minister. Within one

year the colonists were made joyful and as loyal as ever.

The adroit King quickly turned his defeat into triumph. Pitt, who had suffered a nervous break-down, refused to take any active part in leadership. The ministry that conducted business in his name was a political hodge-podge of men who believed in various policies and who had enmities and jealousies among themselves. The King artfully favored any minister who would do his bidding, insulted or disgraced those who would not, stirred up quarrels, maneuvered one opponent of taxation into resigning, got a friend of taxation in his place, played discordant factions against each other, tampered with every sensible plan. The "king's men" were united; the others were all at cross-purposes. One of these "men" was Townshend, the wittiest member of Commons, a brilliant fellow, called the "spoiled child" of the House. While he was temporarily in control of the ministry, he secured the passage of an act to punish New York for disobedience and to impose a revenue on certain articles imported into the colonies—one of which was tea. Again the infuriated colonists petitioned and resisted. But the only effect on the King was to make him more determined to bring his transatlantic subjects to obedience. He drove from the ministry all who withstood his purposes.

When Townshend died, in the fall of 1767, the King filled his place with the tool for which he had been searching, Frederick North, called "Lord," by courtesy, because he was the son of an earl. This is "the



noble lord in the blue ribbon" to whom Burke refers so frequently. His features, oddly enough, very much resembled the King's. Personally he was a likable man—portly, humorous, with a never-ruffled temper. But he is an odious figure in history because he lent himself completely to carrying out his royal master's pernicious designs. Against his own better judgment he forced through Parliament the acts that alienated the colonies. His first great service was to manage the elections to Parliament in 1768; in a century that was notoriously corrupt he succeeded in breaking the record for corruption. He had Commons in his pocket—and not for the use of a ruling class of Englishmen, but for the use of a German king who was resolved to have obedient subjects. George III was at last free to deal with America as he would. Two regiments of soldiers were sent to Boston to overawe the people. In 1769 the colonies were menaced by an act providing that traitors might be taken to England for trial. The King was so gratified at having his purposes thus thoroughly carried out that he procured for Lord North (in 1772) the most coveted aristocratic honor in England, a Knighthood of the Garter. In all English history no commoner had ever worn across his breast the blue ribbon of that order.

To Burke that blue ribbon was a sign and symbol of a German despotism, which was increasing its power every year by the most vicious methods. A good example of the King's Hunnish depravity is a letter which he directed Hillsborough to write, and which Burke refers to in paragraph 96. In the speech from

the throne on May 9, 1769, the King had announced a policy of firmness with the colonies; five days later he told Hillsborough to write a secret letter to the colonies, declaring that the King had never had a design of taxing America, but that a "factious and seditious" House of Commons had been responsible, and that "the King would rather part with his crown than preserve it by deceit!" Such malevolent and dastardly crookedness could hardly be paralleled in English history. This letter, said Burke, in his *Speech on American Taxation*, was the work "of the noble lord in the blue ribbon and of all the King's ministers." (The rules of the House did not allow him to accuse the King directly.) It showed that Commons had become a mere tool in the hands of despotism—useful for infuriating the colonies, and then useful for sending an army against them.

The receipts from the first year of Townshend revenues were \$1,500; the expense for maintaining the system was \$850,000. Even the subservient Tory ministry weakened, and but for North they would have rescinded the obnoxious measures. Finally even North agreed to repeal the revenue law, except the tax on tea. He and his master wished to establish the principle, but saw that it was necessary to appear to yield for the time being. So, in 1770, the tone toward the colonies was decidedly conciliatory. The one duty retained was so slight that tea could be bought cheaper in America than in England; the colonies were officially notified that no other revenue would be imposed; and troops were no longer quartered on the people.

You have noticed that in the four preceding paragraphs the policy toward the colonies has alternated: it was coercive in 1763-65, conciliatory in 1766, coercive in 1767-69, conciliatory in 1770. But the colonies were not deceived by cheap tea. Every year it became clearer that they would fight before submitting to the principle of taxation. In 1770 the "Boston Massacre" occurred; in 1771 there was a pitched battle against the royal government in North Carolina; the revenue cutter *Gaspee* was burned in 1772; at the end of 1773 came the "Boston Tea Party"; in 1774 Massachusetts was punished by having its port of Boston closed, by the destruction of its representative government ("abrogating the charter"), by a provision that British soldiers were not answerable to American law, and by again having soldiers quartered in Boston. In 1774 the other colonies met in a formal congress to pledge their support to Massachusetts. The situation grew constantly more warlike. More soldiers and warships were sent over from England. The colonies began to store up supplies of ammunition. Minute-men began to train in New England towns; as early as September 20,000 responded to an alarm. This was the situation that Burke "dared not name," for the only proper name was "armed rebellion."

So very threatening was the aspect of American affairs that Lord North once more tried to appear friendly by offering on February 20, 1775, a resolution to this effect: "If any colony makes such a contribution to the empire as meets the approval of Parliament,

it shall be free from all taxation." This was the "project" that Burke refers to in paragraphs 10-13 and objects to in paragraphs 123-132. The futile little piece of hypocrisy is interesting as being the last conciliatory measure that passed in Parliament. Burke made the most of it on March 22, when he proposed his own honest and statesmanlike resolutions for real conciliation. But all his wisdom and brilliance and fervor were in vain. He might as well have tried to persuade a counting-machine, for the House of Commons had become simply a machine for recording the King's will. It counted with mechanical indifference an adverse vote of 270 to 78.

Twenty-seven days later the battle of Lexington was fought. A German king had finally inflamed his subjects against each other and was profoundly grateful that a civil war had begun. For fifteen years he had built up his power at home by inciting quarrels among statesmen; he now had brought all his statesmen to fight against all his colonists; he thought his prospects for despotic power were very bright. And so they were if his troops could win in the civil war that he had fomented between his people in England and his people in America.

#### ENGLISH FREEDOM TRIUMPHS

So the American Revolution was, as our American historian Fiske has so well shown, a contest between German tyranny and English freedom, although neither party in the struggle knew that this was the

issue. After war has been declared, people cannot examine causes; they have to fight.

Through the eight years of the Revolution North continued to be a servile minister to his German master, and did not quail until he received the fearful news that Cornwallis had surrendered. Then this even-tempered humorist staggered as if he had been shot, exclaiming, "Oh, God! it's all over!"

His words had a wider meaning than he knew. Not only was it all over with a German king's effort to destroy English freedom in America, but it was all over with his effort to destroy English freedom in England. North resigned, and from that day the King's power for despotism was at an end. Within two years North was in opposition to the King, in a ministry that was headed by the son of that Pitt whom Englishmen on both sides of the Atlantic had so admired and trusted. And the son deserved the same trust for the same reason: he represented that public opinion which demanded a government by and for the people. When our new-born states were forming themselves into a republic, a new kind of House of Commons was elected in England—a kind that was responsive to public opinion.

To be sure, the millennium had not come. Just as English freedom had to develop slowly through the preceding hundred and fifty years, against constant difficulties and setbacks, so it was retarded during the century following, especially after 1792, by a reaction from the horrible excesses of the French Revolution. But progress came with time. Parliament has grown



steadily more responsive to the will of the people, until now the English government is in some ways more democratic than our own.

Yet, in spite of this growth of democracy in England, in spite of the similarity of our national ideals, in spite of our common aim and faith and common blood, the animosity caused by the Revolution has never been wholly removed. That civil war produced a deep and lasting alienation, just as our American Civil War caused hatreds that have not entirely died, even among a people living in a Union of neighboring states. The distrust roused by the Revolution was perpetuated for a hundred and thirty years. Englishmen have made fun of us, and our school histories have spoken bitterly of them; national antipathies have been strong.

But it needed only the common peril of 1914 to show both countries how deep was our mutual desire for English freedom. In 1918 an English editor, speaking to American newspaper men in Paris, could declare with truth: "A warm friendship has sprung up between the British and the American soldiers who have fought together at the front." And our American Admiral Rodman could say with truth, when he returned from England, "Our mutual association in this war's work has drawn us so close together that in the Grand Fleet it was instrumental in ripening friendship into brotherhood." Americans can realize now the truth of what the English historian Green wrote, when the population of the United States was only forty million: "If American independence crip-



pled for a while the supremacy of the English nation, it founded the supremacy of the English race. . . . Every year proves more clearly that in spirit the English People is one. The distance that parted England from America lessens every day. The ties that unite them grow every day stronger. . . . In the centuries that lie before us the primacy of the world will lie with the English people.”



## BURKE'S SPEECH ON CONCILIATION WITH AMERICA<sup>1</sup>

1. I hope, Sir, that notwithstanding the austerity of the Chair your good nature will incline you to some degree of indulgence towards human frailty. You will not think it unnatural that those who have an object depending which strongly engages their hopes and fears should be somewhat inclined to superstition. As I came into the House full of anxiety about the event of my motion, I found, to my infinite surprise, that the grand penal bill, by which we had passed sentence on the trade and sustenance of America, is to be returned to us from the other House. I do confess, I could not help looking on this event as a fortunate omen. I look upon it as a sort of providential favor, by which we are put once more in possession of our deliberative capacity, upon a business so very questionable in its nature, so very uncertain in its issue. By the return of this bill, which seemed to have taken its flight for ever, we are at this very instant nearly as free to choose a plan for our American government as we were on the first day of the session. If, Sir, we incline to the side of conciliation, we are not at all embarrassed—unless we please to make ourselves so—by any incongruous mixture of coercion and restraint.

<sup>1</sup>The speech will be more interesting to the student if he reads first "Where Burke Spoke," pp. 284-285.

We are therefore called upon, as it were by a superior warning voice, again to attend to America, to attend to the whole of it together, and to review the subject with an unusual degree of care and calmness.

2. Surely it is an awful subject, or there is none so on this side of the grave. When I first had the honor of a seat in this House, the affairs of that continent pressed themselves upon us as the most important and most delicate object of parliamentary attention. My little share in this great deliberation oppressed me. I found myself a partaker in a very high trust; and having no sort of reason to rely on the strength of my natural abilities for the proper execution of that trust, I was obliged to take more than common pains to instruct myself in everything which relates to our colonies. I was not less under the necessity of forming some fixed ideas concerning the general policy of the British Empire. Something of this sort seemed to be indispensable, in order, amidst so vast a fluctuation of passions and opinions, to center my thoughts, to ballast my conduct, to preserve me from being blown about by every wind of fashionable doctrine. I really did not think it safe or manly to have fresh principles to seek upon every fresh mail which should arrive from America.

3. At that period I had the fortune to find myself in perfect concurrence with a large majority in this House. Bowing under that high authority, and penetrated with the sharpness and strength of that early impression, I have continued ever since, without the least deviation, in my original sentiments. Whether

this be owing to an obstinate perseverance in error, or to a religious adherence to what appears to me truth and reason, it is in your equity to judge.

4. Sir, Parliament, having an enlarged view of objects, made, during this interval, more frequent changes in their sentiments and their conduct than could be justified in a particular person upon the contracted scale of private information. But though I do not hazard anything approaching to censure on the motives of former Parliaments to all those alterations, one fact is undoubted—that under them the state of America has been kept in continual agitation. Everything administered as remedy to the public complaint, if it did not produce, was at least followed by, an heightening of the distemper; until, by a variety of experiments, that important country has been brought into her present situation—a situation which I will not miscall, which I dare not name, which I scarcely know how to comprehend in the terms of any description.

5. In this posture, Sir, things stood at the beginning of the session. About that time a worthy member of great parliamentary experience, who, in the year 1766, filled the chair of the American Committee with much ability, took me aside, and, lamenting the present aspect of our politics, told me things were come to such a pass that our former methods of proceeding in the House would be no longer tolerated; that the public tribunal—never too indulgent to a long and unsuccessful opposition—would now scrutinize our conduct with unusual severity; that the very vicissitudes and shiftings of ministerial measures, instead of

You will see it just as it is, and you will treat it just as it deserves.

9. The proposition is peace. Not peace through the medium of war; not peace to be hunted through the labyrinth of intricate and endless negotiations; not peace to arise out of universal discord, fomented from principle in all parts of the empire; not peace to depend on the juridical determination of perplexing questions, or the precise marking the shadowy boundaries of a complex government. It is simple peace, sought in its natural course, and in its ordinary haunts—it is peace sought in the spirit of peace, and laid in principles purely pacific. I propose, by removing the ground of the difference, and by restoring the *former unsuspecting confidence of the colonies in the mother country*, to give permanent satisfaction to your people, and—far from a scheme of ruling by discord—to reconcile them to each other in the same act, and by the bond of the very same interest, which reconciles them to British government.

10. My idea is nothing more. Refined policy ever has been the parent of confusion, and ever will be so, as long as the world endures. Plain good intention, which is as easily discovered at the first view as fraud is surely detected at last, is, let me say, of no mean force in the government of mankind. Genuine simplicity of heart is a healing and cementing principle. My plan, therefore, being formed upon the most simple grounds imaginable, may disappoint some people when they hear it. It has nothing to recommend it to the pruriency of curious ears. There is nothing at all new



and captivating in it. It has nothing of the splendor of the project which has been lately laid upon your table by the noble lord in the blue ribbon. It does not propose to fill your lobby with squabbling colony agents, who will require the interposition of your mace at every instant, to keep the peace amongst them. It does not institute a magnificent auction of finance, where captivated provinces come to general ransom by bidding against each other, until you knock down the hammer, and determine a proportion of payments beyond all the powers of algebra to equalize and settle.

11. The plan which I shall presume to suggest derives, however, one great advantage from the proposition and registry of that noble lord's project. The idea of conciliation is admissible. First, the House, in accepting the resolution moved by the noble lord, has admitted, notwithstanding the menacing front of our address, notwithstanding our heavy bill of pains and penalties, that we do not think ourselves precluded from all ideas of free grace and bounty.

12. The House has gone farther: it has declared conciliation admissible, *previous* to any submission on the part of America. It has even shot a good deal beyond that mark, and has admitted that the complaints of our former mode of exerting the right of taxation were not wholly unfounded. That right thus exerted is allowed to have had something reprehensible in it, something unwise or something grievous, since, in the midst of our heat and resentment, we of ourselves have proposed a capital alteration; and, in order to get rid of what seemed so very exceptionable,

have instituted a mode that is altogether new—one that is, indeed, wholly alien from all the ancient methods and forms of Parliament.

13. The *principle* of this proceeding is large enough for my purpose. The means proposed by the noble lord for carrying his ideas into execution I think, indeed, are very indifferently suited to the end, and this I shall endeavor to show you before I sit down. But, for the present, I take my ground on the admitted principle. I mean to give peace. Peace implies reconciliation; and, where there has been a material dispute, reconciliation does in a manner always imply concession on the one part or on the other. In this state of things I make no difficulty in affirming that the proposal ought to originate from us. Great and acknowledged force is not impaired, either in effect or in opinion, by an unwillingness to exert itself. The superior power may offer peace with honor and with safety. Such an offer from such a power will be attributed to magnanimity. But the concessions of the weak are the concessions of fear. When such a one is disarmed, he is wholly at the mercy of his superior; and he loses forever that time and those chances, which, as they happen to all men, are the strength and resources of all inferior power.

14. The capital leading questions on which you must this day decide are these two: first, whether you ought to concede; and, secondly, what your concession ought to be. On the first of these questions we have gained—as I have just taken the liberty of observing to you—some ground. But I am sensible that

a good deal more is still to be done. Indeed, Sir, to enable us to determine both on the one and the other of these great questions with a firm and precise judgment, I think it may be necessary to consider distinctly the true nature and the peculiar circumstances of the object which we have before us. Because, after all our struggle, whether we will or not, we must govern America according to that nature and to those circumstances, and not according to our own imaginations, not according to abstract ideas of right; by no means according to mere general theories of government, the resort to which appears to me, in our present situation, no better than arrant trifling. I shall therefore endeavor, with your leave, to lay before you some of the most material of these circumstances in as full and as clear a manner as I am able to state them.

15. The first thing that we have to consider with regard to the nature of the object is the number of people in the colonies. I have taken for some years a good deal of pains on that point. I can by no calculation justify myself in placing the number below two millions of inhabitants of our own European blood and color; besides at least 500,000 others, who form no inconsiderable part of the strength and opulence of the whole. This, Sir, is, I believe, about the true number. There is no occasion to exaggerate where plain truth is of so much weight and importance. But whether I put the present numbers too high or too low is a matter of little moment. Such is the strength with which population shoots in that part of the world that, state the numbers as high as we will, whilst the dispute con-

tinues, the exaggeration ends. Whilst we are discussing any given magnitude, they are grown to it. Whilst we spend our time in deliberating on the mode of governing two millions, we shall find we have millions more to manage. Your children do not grow faster from infancy to manhood than they spread from families to communities, and from villages to nations.

16. I put this consideration of the present and the growing numbers in the front of our deliberation; because, Sir, this consideration will make it evident to a blunter discernment than yours, that no partial, narrow, contracted, pinched, occasional system will be at all suitable to such an object. It will show you that it is not to be considered as one of those *minima* which are out of the eye and consideration of the law; not a paltry excrescence of the state; not a mean dependent, who may be neglected with little damage, and provoked with little danger. It will prove that some degree of care and caution is required in the handling such an object; it will show that you ought not, in reason, to trifle with so large a mass of the interests and feelings of the human race. You could at no time do so without guilt; and be assured you will not be able to do it long with impunity.

17. But the population of this country, the great and growing population, though a very important consideration, will lose much of its weight if not combined with other circumstances. The commerce of your colonies is out of all proportion beyond the numbers of the people. This ground of their commerce indeed has been trod some days ago, and with great

ability, by a distinguished person, at your bar. This gentleman, after thirty-five years—it is so long since he first appeared at the same place to plead for the commerce of Great Britain—has come again before you to plead the same cause, without any other effect of time than that, to the fire of imagination and extent of erudition which even then marked him as one of the first literary characters of his age, he has added a consummate knowledge in the commercial interest of his country, formed by a long course of enlightened and discriminating experience.

18. Sir, I should be inexcusable in coming after such a person with any detail, if a great part of the members who now fill the House had not the misfortune to be absent when he appeared at your bar. Besides, Sir, I propose to take the matter at periods of time somewhat different from his. There is, if I mistake not, a point of view from whence if you will look at this subject, it is impossible that it should not make an impression upon you.

19. I have in my hand two accounts: one a comparative state of the export trade of England to its colonies, as it stood in the year 1704, and as it stood in the year 1772; the other a state of the export trade of this country to its colonies alone, as it stood in 1772, compared with the whole trade of England to all parts of the world—the colonies included—in the year 1704. They are from good vouchers: the latter period from the accounts on your table, the earlier from an original manuscript of Davenant, who first established the Inspector-General's office, which has been ever since his



time so abundant a source of parliamentary information.

20. The export trade to the colonies consists of three great branches: the African, which, terminating almost wholly in the colonies, must be put to the account of their commerce; the West Indian; and the North American. All these are so interwoven that the attempt to separate them would tear to pieces the texture of the whole; and, if not entirely destroy, would very much depreciate the value of all the parts. I therefore consider these three denominations to be, what in effect they are, one trade.

21. The trade to the colonies, taken on the export side, at the beginning of this century—that is, in the year 1704—stood thus:

Exports to North America and the	
West Indies . . . . .	£483,265
To Africa . . . . .	86,665
	<hr/>
	£569,930

22. In the year 1772, which I take as a middle year between the highest and lowest of those lately laid on your table, the account was as follows:

To North America and the West	
Indies . . . . .	£4,791,734
To Africa . . . . .	866,398
To which if you add the export	
trade from Scotland, which	
had in 1704 no existence . . .	364,000
	<hr/>
	£6,022,132



23. From five hundred and odd thousands it has grown to six millions. It has increased no less than twelvefold. This is the state of the colony trade, as compared with itself at these two periods, within this century; and this is matter for meditation. But this is not all. Examine my second account. See how the export trade to the colonies alone in 1772 stood in the other point of view—that is, as compared to the whole trade of England in 1704.

The whole export trade of Eng- land, including that to the colonies, in 1704 . . . . .	£6,509,000
Export to the colonies alone, in 1772 . . . . .	6,022,000
	<hr/>
	Difference £ 487,000

24. The trade with America alone is now within less than £500,000 of being equal to what this great commercial nation, England, carried on at the beginning of this century with the whole world! If I had taken the largest year of those on your table, it would rather have exceeded. But, it will be said, is not this American trade an unnatural protuberance, that has drawn the juices from the rest of the body? The reverse. It is the very food that has nourished every other part into its present magnitude. Our general trade has been greatly augmented, and augmented more or less in almost every part to which it ever extended—but with this material difference, that of the six millions which in the beginning of the century

constituted the whole mass of our export commerce, the colony trade was but one twelfth part; it is now (as a part of sixteen millions) considerably more than a third of the whole. This is the relative proportion of the importance of the colonies at these two periods; and all reasoning concerning our mode of treating them must have this proportion as its basis, or it is a reasoning weak, rotten, and sophistical.

25. Mr. Speaker, I cannot prevail on myself to hurry over this great consideration. It is good for us to be here. We stand where we have an immense view of what is, and what is past. Clouds, indeed, and darkness rest upon the future. Let us, however, before we descend from this noble eminence, reflect that this growth of our national prosperity has happened within the short period of the life of man. It has happened within sixty-eight years. There are those alive whose memory might touch the two extremities. For instance, my Lord Bathurst might remember all the stages of the progress. He was in 1704 of an age at least to be made to comprehend such things. He was then old enough

*acta parentum*

*Jam legere, et quæ sit poterit cognoscere virtus.*

Suppose, Sir, that the angel of this auspicious youth, foreseeing the many virtues which made him one of the most amiable, as he is one of the most fortunate, men of his age, had opened to him in vision that when, in the fourth generation, the third prince of the House of Brunswick had sat twelve years on the throne of that nation, which—by the happy issue of moderate

and healing counsels—was to be made Great Britain, he should see his son, Lord Chancellor of England, turn back the current of hereditary dignity to its fountain, and raise him to a higher rank of peerage, whilst he enriched the family with a new one—if, amidst these bright and happy scenes of domestic honor and prosperity, that angel should have drawn up the curtain, and unfolded the rising glories of his country, and, whilst he was gazing with admiration on the then commercial grandeur of England, the Genius should point out to him a little speck, scarce visible in the mass of the national interest, a small seminal principle rather than a formed body, and should tell him—“Young man, there is America, which at this day serves for little more than to amuse you with stories of savage men and uncouth manners, yet shall, before you taste of death, show itself equal to the whole of that commerce which now attracts the envy of the world. Whatever England has been growing to by a progressive increase of improvement, brought in by varieties of people, by succession of civilizing conquests and civilizing settlements in a series of seventeen hundred years, you shall see as much added to her by America in the course of a single life!” If this state of his country had been foretold to him, would it not require all the sanguine credulity of youth, and all the fervid glow of enthusiasm, to make him believe it? Fortunate man, he has lived to see it! Fortunate indeed, if he lives to see nothing that shall vary the prospect, and cloud the setting of his day!

26. Excuse me, Sir, if, turning from such thoughts, I resume this comparative view once more. You have seen it on a large scale; look at it on a small one. I will point out to your attention a particular instance of it in the single Province of Pennsylvania. In the year 1704 that Province called for £11,459 in value of your commodities, native and foreign. This was the whole. What did it demand in 1772? Why, nearly fifty times as much; for in that year the export to Pennsylvania was £507,909—nearly equal to the export to all the colonies together in the first period.

27. I choose, Sir, to enter into these minute and particular details, because generalities, which in all other cases are apt to heighten and raise the subject, have here a tendency to sink it. When we speak of the commerce with our colonies, fiction lags after truth, invention is unfruitful, and imagination cold and barren.

28. So far, Sir, as to the importance of the object, in the view of its commerce, as concerned in the exports from England. If I were to detail the imports, I could show how many enjoyments they procure which deceive the burthen of life; how many materials which invigorate the springs of national industry, and extend and animate every part of our foreign and domestic commerce. This would be a curious subject indeed—but I must prescribe bounds to myself in a matter so vast and various.

29. I pass therefore to the colonies in another point of view—their agriculture. This they have prosecuted with such a spirit that, besides feeding

plentifully their own growing multitude, their annual export of grain, comprehending rice, has some years ago exceeded a million in value. Of their last harvest, I am persuaded they will export much more. At the beginning of the century some of these colonies imported corn from the mother country. For some time past, the Old World has been fed from the New. The scarcity which you have felt would have been a desolating famine, if this child of your old age, with a true filial piety, with a Roman charity, had not put the full breast of its youthful exuberance to the mouth of its exhausted parent.

30. As to the wealth which the colonies have drawn from the sea by their fisheries, you had all that matter fully opened at your bar. You surely thought these acquisitions of value, for they seemed even to excite your envy; and yet the spirit by which that enterprising employment has been exercised ought rather, in my opinion, to have raised your esteem and admiration. And pray, Sir, what in the world is equal to it? Pass by the other parts, and look at the manner in which the people of New England have of late carried on the whale fishery. Whilst we follow them among the tumbling mountains of ice, and behold them penetrating into the deepest frozen recesses of Hudson's Bay and Davis' Straits, whilst we are looking for them beneath the Arctic Circle, we hear that they have pierced into the opposite region of polar cold, that they are at the antipodes, and engaged under the frozen Serpent of the South. Falkland Island, which seemed too remote and romantic an object for the



grasp of national ambition, is but a stage and resting-place in the progress of their victorious industry. Nor is the equinoctial heat more discouraging to them than the accumulated winter of both the poles. We know that whilst some of them draw the line and strike the harpoon on the coast of Africa, others run the longitude and pursue their gigantic game along the coast of Brazil. No sea but what is vexed by their fisheries; no climate that is not witness to their toils. Neither the perseverance of Holland, nor the activity of France, nor the dextrous and firm sagacity of English enterprise, ever carried this most perilous mode of hardy industry to the extent to which it has been pushed by this recent people—a people who are still, as it were, but in the gristle, and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood.

31. When I contemplate these things; when I know that the colonies in general owe little or nothing to any care of ours, and that they are not squeezed into this happy form by the constraints of watchful and suspicious government, but that, through a wise and salutary neglect, a generous nature has been suffered to take her own way to perfection; when I reflect upon these effects, when I see how profitable they have been to us, I feel all the pride of power sink, and all presumption in the wisdom of human contrivances melt and die away within me. My rigor relents. I pardon something to the spirit of liberty.

32. I am sensible, Sir, that all which I have asserted in my detail is admitted in the gross; but that quite a different conclusion is drawn from it. Amer-



ica, gentlemen say, is a noble object. It is an object well worth fighting for. Certainly it is, if fighting a people be the best way of gaining them. Gentlemen in this respect will be led to their choice of means by their complexions and their habits. Those who understand the military art will of course have some predilection for it. Those who wield the thunder of the state may have more confidence in the efficacy of arms. But I confess, possibly for want of this knowledge, my opinion is much more in favor of prudent management than of force; considering force not as an odious, but a feeble instrument, for preserving a people so numerous, so active, so growing, so spirited as this, in a profitable and subordinate connection with us.

33. First, Sir, permit me to observe that the use of force alone is but *temporary*. It may subdue for a moment, but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again; and a nation is not governed which is perpetually to be conquered.

34. My next objection is its *uncertainty*. Terror is not always the effect of force; and an armament is not a victory. If you do not succeed, you are without resource: for, conciliation failing, force remains; but, force failing, no further hope of reconciliation is left. Power and authority are sometimes bought by kindness, but they can never be begged as alms by an impoverished and defeated violence.

35. A further objection to force is that you *impair the object* by your very endeavors to preserve it. The thing you fought for is not the thing which you recover, but depreciated, sunk, wasted, and consumed

in the contest. Nothing less will content me than *whole America*. I do not choose to consume its strength along with our own, because in all parts it is the British strength that I consume. I do not choose to be caught by a foreign enemy at the end of this exhausting conflict, and still less in the midst of it. I may escape, but I can make no insurance against such an event. Let me add that I do not choose wholly to break the American spirit, because it is the spirit that has made the country.

36. Lastly, we have no sort of *experience* in favor of force as an instrument in the rule of our colonies. Their growth and their utility has been owing to methods altogether different. Our ancient indulgence has been said to be pursued to a fault. It may be so. But we know, if feeling is evidence, that our fault was more tolerable than our attempt to mend it, and our sin far more salutary than our penitence.

37. These, Sir, are my reasons for not entertaining that high opinion of untried force by which many gentlemen, for whose sentiments in other particulars I have great respect, seem to be so greatly captivated. But there is still behind a third consideration concerning this object, which serves to determine my opinion on the sort of policy which ought to be pursued in the management of America even more than its population and its commerce—I mean its *temper and character*.

38. In this character of the Americans a love of freedom is the predominating feature which marks and distinguishes the whole; and as an ardent is always

a jealous affection, your colonies become suspicious, restive, and untractable whenever they see the least attempt to wrest from them by force, or shuffle from them by chicane, what they think the only advantage worth living for. This fierce spirit of liberty is stronger in the English colonies probably than in any other people of the earth, and this from a great variety of powerful causes; which, to understand the true temper of their minds, and the direction which this spirit takes, it will not be amiss to lay open somewhat more largely.

39. First, the people of the colonies are descendants of Englishmen. England, Sir, is a nation, which still I hope respects, and formerly adored, her freedom. The colonists emigrated from you when this part of your character was most predominant, and they took this bias and direction the moment they parted from your hands. They are therefore not only devoted to liberty, but to liberty according to English ideas and on English principles. Abstract liberty, like other mere abstractions, is not to be found. Liberty inheres in some sensible object; and every nation has formed to itself some favorite point which, by way of eminence, becomes the criterion of their happiness. It happened, you know, Sir, that the great contests for freedom in this country were from the earliest times chiefly upon the question of taxing. Most of the contests in the ancient commonwealths turned primarily on the right of election of magistrates, or on the balance among the several orders of the state. The question of money was not with them so immediate.

But in England it was otherwise. On this point of taxes the ablest pens and most eloquent tongues have been exercised; the greatest spirits have acted and suffered. In order to give the fullest satisfaction concerning the importance of this point it was not only necessary for those who in argument defended the excellence of the English Constitution to insist on this privilege of granting money as a dry point of fact, and to prove that the right had been acknowledged in ancient parchments and blind usages to reside in a certain body called a House of Commons. They went much further; they attempted to prove—and they succeeded—that in theory it ought to be so, from the particular nature of a House of Commons as an immediate representative of the people, whether the old records had delivered this oracle or not. They took infinite pains to inculcate, as a fundamental principle, that in all monarchies the people must in effect themselves mediately or immediately, possess the power of granting their own money, or no shadow of liberty could subsist. The colonies draw from you, as with their life-blood, these ideas and principles. Their love of liberty, as with you, fixed and attached on this specific point of taxing. Liberty might be safe, or might be endangered, in twenty other particulars, without their being much pleased or alarmed. Here they felt its pulse; and as they found that beat, they thought themselves sick or sound. I do not say whether they were right or wrong in applying your general arguments to their own case. It is not easy, indeed, to make a monopoly of theorems and corollaries. The

fact is that they did thus apply those general arguments; and your mode of governing them—whether through lenity or indolence, through wisdom or mistake—confirmed them in the imagination that they, as well as you, had an interest in these common principles.

40. They were further confirmed in this pleasing error by the form of their provincial legislative assemblies. Their governments are popular in a high degree; some are merely popular; in all, the popular representative is the most weighty; and this share of the people in their ordinary government never fails to inspire them with lofty sentiments, and with a strong aversion from whatever tends to deprive them of their chief importance.

41. If anything were wanting to this necessary operation of the form of government, religion would have given it a complete effect. Religion, always a principle of energy, in this new people is no way worn out or impaired; and their mode of professing it is also one main cause of this free spirit. The people are Protestants, and of that kind which is the most adverse to all implicit submission of mind and opinion. This is a persuasion not only favorable to liberty, but built upon it. I do not think, Sir, that the reason of this averseness in the dissenting churches from all that looks like absolute government is so much to be sought in their religious tenets as in their history. Every one knows that the Roman Catholic religion is at least coeval with most of the governments where it prevails, that it has generally gone hand in hand with them,



and received great favor and every kind of support from authority. The Church of England, too, was formed from her cradle under the nursing care of regular government. But the dissenting interests have sprung up in direct opposition to all the ordinary powers of the world, and could justify that opposition only on a strong claim to natural liberty. Their very existence depended on the powerful and unremitted assertion of that claim. All Protestantism, even the most cold and passive, is a sort of dissent. But the religion most prevalent in our northern colonies is a refinement on the principle of resistance; it is the dissidence of dissent, and the protestantism of the Protestant religion. This religion, under a variety of denominations agreeing in nothing but in the communion of the spirit of liberty, is predominant in most of the northern provinces, where the Church of England, notwithstanding its legal rights, is in reality no more than a sort of private sect, not composing, most probably, the tenth of the people. The colonists left England when this spirit was high, and in the emigrants was the highest of all; and even that stream of foreigners which has been constantly flowing into these colonies has, for the greatest part, been composed of dissenters from the establishments of their several countries, who have brought with them a temper and character far from alien to that of the people with whom they mixed.

42. Sir, I can perceive by their manner that some gentlemen object to the latitude of this description, because in the southern colonies the Church of Eng-



land forms a large body, and has a regular establishment. It is certainly true. There is, however, a circumstance attending these colonies, which in my opinion fully counterbalances this difference, and makes the spirit of liberty still more high and haughty than in those to the northward. It is that in Virginia and the Carolinas they have a vast multitude of slaves. Where this is the case in any part of the world, those who are free are by far the most proud and jealous of their freedom. Freedom is to them not only an enjoyment, but a kind of rank and privilege. Not seeing there that freedom, as in countries where it is a common blessing and as broad and general as the air, may be united with much abject toil, with great misery, with all the exterior of servitude, liberty looks amongst them like something that is more noble and liberal. I do not mean, Sir, to commend the superior morality of this sentiment, which has at least as much pride as virtue in it; but I cannot alter the nature of man. The fact is so: and these people of the southern colonies are much more strongly, and with a higher and more stubborn spirit, attached to liberty, than those to the northward. Such were all the ancient commonwealths; such were our Gothic ancestors; such in our days were the Poles; and such will be all masters of slaves, who are not slaves themselves. In such a people, the haughtiness of domination combines with the spirit of freedom, fortifies it, and renders it invincible.

43. Permit me, Sir, to add another circumstance in our colonies which contributes no mean part towards

the growth and effect of this untractable spirit. I mean their education. In no country perhaps in the world is the law so general a study. The profession itself is numerous and powerful, and in most provinces it takes the lead. The greater number of the deputies sent to the Congress were lawyers. But all who read—and most do read—endeavor to obtain some smattering in that science. I have been told by an eminent bookseller that in no branch of his business, after tracts of popular devotion, were so many books as those on the law exported to the plantations. The colonists have now fallen into the way of printing them for their own use. I hear that they have sold nearly as many of Blackstone's Commentaries in America as in England. General Gage marks out this disposition very particularly in a letter on your table. He states that all the people in his government are lawyers, or smatterers in law; and that in Boston they have been enabled, by successful chicane, wholly to evade many parts of one of your capital penal constitutions. The smartness of debate will say that this knowledge ought to teach them more clearly the rights of legislature, their obligations to obedience, and the penalties of rebellion. All this is mighty well. But my honorable and learned friend on the floor, who condescends to mark what I say for animadversion, will disdain that ground. He has heard, as well as I, that when great honors and great emoluments do not win over this knowledge to the service of the state, it is a formidable adversary to government. If the spirit be not tamed and broken by these happy methods, it is stubborn and litigious.

*Abeunt studia in mores.* This study renders men acute, inquisitive, dextrous, prompt in attack, ready in defense, full of resources. In other countries the people, more simple and of a less mercurial cast, judge of an ill principle in government only by an actual grievance; here they anticipate the evil, and judge of the pressure of the grievance by the badness of the principle. They augur misgovernment at a distance, and snuff the approach of tyranny in every tainted breeze.

44. The last cause of this disobedient spirit in the colonies is hardly less powerful than the rest, as it is not merely moral, but laid deep in the natural constitution of things. Three thousand miles of ocean lie between you and them. No contrivance can prevent the effect of this distance in weakening government. Seas roll, and months pass, between the order and the execution; and the want of a speedy explanation of a single point is enough to defeat a whole system. You have, indeed, winged ministers of vengeance, who carry your bolts in their pounces to the remotest verge of the sea. But there a power steps in that limits the arrogance of raging passions and furious elements, and says, "So far shalt thou go, and no farther." Who are you that should fret and rage, and bite the chains of nature? Nothing worse happens to you than does to all nations who have extensive empire; and it happens in all the forms into which empire can be thrown. In large bodies the circulation of power must be less vigorous at the extremities. Nature has said it. The Turk cannot govern Egypt, and Arabia, and

Kurdistan, as he governs Thrace; nor has he the same dominion in Crimea and Algiers which he has at Brusa and Smyrna. Despotism itself is obliged to truck and huckster. The Sultan gets such obedience as he can. He governs with a loose rein, that he may govern at all; and the whole of the force and vigor of his authority in his center is derived from a prudent relaxation in all his borders. Spain, in her provinces, is perhaps not so well obeyed as you are in yours. She complies too; she submits; she watches times. This is the immutable condition, the eternal law, of extensive and detached empire.

45. Then, Sir, from these six capital sources—of descent, of form of government, of religion in the northern provinces, of manners in the southern, of education, of the remoteness of situation from the first mover of government—from all these causes a fierce spirit of liberty has grown up. It has grown with the growth of the people in your colonies, and increased with the increase of their wealth: a spirit that—unhappily meeting with an exercise of power in England which, however lawful, is not reconcilable to any ideas of liberty, much less with theirs—has kindled this flame that is ready to consume us.

46. I do not mean to commend either the spirit in this excess or the moral causes which produce it. Perhaps a more smooth and accommodating spirit of freedom in them would be more acceptable to us. Perhaps ideas of liberty might be desired more reconcilable with an arbitrary and boundless authority. Perhaps we might wish the colonists to be persuaded that

their liberty is more secure when held in trust for them by us, as their guardians during a perpetual minority, than with any part of it in their own hands. But the question is not whether their spirit deserves praise or blame. What, in the name of God, shall we do with it? You have before you the object, such as it is, with all its glories, with all its imperfections on its head. You see the magnitude, the importance, the temper, the habits, the disorders. By all these considerations we are strongly urged to determine something concerning it. We are called upon to fix some rule and line for our future conduct, which may give a little stability to our politics, and prevent the return of such unhappy deliberations as the present. Every such return will bring the matter before us in a still more untractable form. For what astonishing and incredible things have we not seen already! What monsters have not been generated from this unnatural contention! Whilst every principle of authority and resistance has been pushed, upon both sides, as far as it would go, there is nothing so solid and certain, either in reasoning or in practice, that has not been shaken. Until very lately all authority in America seemed to be nothing but an emanation from yours. Even the popular part of the colony constitution derived all its activity, and its first vital movement, from the pleasure of the crown. We thought, Sir, that the utmost which the discontented colonists could do was to disturb authority; we never dreamt they could of themselves supply it, knowing in general what an operose business it is to establish a government absolutely new. But having,



for our purposes in this contention, resolved that none but an obedient assembly should sit, the humors of the people there, finding all passage through the legal channel stopped, with great violence broke out another way. Some provinces have tried their experiment, as we have tried ours; and theirs has succeeded. They have formed a government sufficient for its purposes, without the bustle of a revolution or the troublesome formality of an election. Evident necessity and tacit consent have done the business in an instant. So well they have done it that Lord Dunmore—the account is among the fragments on your table—tells you that the new-institution is infinitely better obeyed than the ancient government ever was in its most fortunate periods. Obedience is what makes government, and not the names by which it is called; not the name of Governor, as formerly, or Committee, as at present. This new government has originated directly from the people, and was not transmitted through any of the ordinary artificial media of a positive constitution. It was not a manufacture ready formed, and transmitted to them in that condition from England. The evil arising from hence is this: that the colonists having once found the possibility of enjoying the advantages of order in the midst of a struggle for liberty, such struggles will not henceforward seem so terrible to the settled and sober part of mankind as they had appeared before the trial.

47. Pursuing the same plan, of punishing by the denial of the exercise of government, to still greater lengths, we wholly abrogated the ancient government



of Massachusetts. We were confident that the first feeling, if not the very prospect of anarchy would instantly enforce a complete submission. The experiment was tried. A new, strange, unexpected face of things appeared. Anarchy is found tolerable. A vast province has now subsisted, and subsisted in a considerable degree of health and vigor, for near a twelve-month, without governor, without public council, without judges, without executive magistrates. How long it will continue in this state, or what may arise out of this unheard-of situation, how can the wisest of us conjecture? Our late experience has taught us that many of those fundamental principles, formerly believed infallible, are either not of the importance they were imagined to be, or that we have not at all adverted to some other far more important and far more powerful principles which entirely overrule those we had considered as omnipotent. I am much against any further experiments which tend to put to the proof any more of these allowed opinions which contribute so much to the public tranquillity. In effect, we suffer as much at home by this loosening of all ties, and this concussion of all established opinions, as we do abroad. For, in order to prove that the Americans have no right to their liberties, we are every day endeavoring to subvert the maxims which preserve the whole spirit of our own. To prove that the Americans ought not to be free, we are obliged to depreciate the value of freedom itself; and we never seem to gain a paltry advantage over them in debate, without attacking some of those principles, or deriding some of those feelings, for which our ancestors have shed their blood.

48. But, Sir, in wishing to put an end to pernicious experiments I do not mean to preclude the fullest inquiry. Far from it. Far from deciding on a sudden or partial view, I would patiently go round and round the subject, and survey it minutely in every possible aspect. Sir, if I were capable of engaging you to an equal attention, I would state that, as far as I am capable of discerning, there are but three ways of proceeding relative to this stubborn spirit which prevails in your colonies and disturbs your government. These are: to change that spirit, as inconvenient, by removing the causes; to prosecute it as criminal; or to comply with it as necessary. I would not be guilty of an imperfect enumeration; I can think of but these three. Another has indeed been started, that of giving up the colonies; but it met so slight a reception that I do not think myself obliged to dwell a great while upon it. It is nothing but a little sally of anger, like the forwardness of peevish children, who, when they cannot get all they would have, are resolved to take nothing.

49. The first of these plans—to change the spirit, as inconvenient, by removing the causes—I think is the most like a systematic proceeding. It is radical in its principle; but it is attended with great difficulties, some of them little short, as I conceive, of impossibilities. This will appear by examining into the plans which have been proposed.

50. As the growing population of the colonies is evidently one cause of their resistance, it was last session mentioned in both Houses by men of weight, and received not without applause, that, in order to

check this evil, it would be proper for the crown to make no further grants of land. But to this scheme there are two objections. The first, that there is already so much unsettled land in private hands as to afford room for an immense future population, although the crown not only withheld its grants, but annihilated its soil. If this be the case, then the only effect of this avarice of desolation, this hoarding of a royal wilderness, would be to raise the value of the possessions in the hands of the great private monopolists, without any adequate check to the growing and alarming mischief of population.

51. But if you stopped your grants, what would be the consequence? The people would occupy without grants. They have already so occupied in many places. You cannot station garrisons in every part of these deserts. If you drive the people from one place, they will carry on their annual tillage, and remove with their flocks and herds to another. Many of the people in the back settlements are already little attached to particular situations. Already they have topped the Appalachian mountains. From thence they behold before them an immense plain—one vast, rich, level meadow—a square of five hundred miles. Over this they would wander without a possibility of restraint; they would change their manners with the habits of their life; would soon forget a government by which they were disowned; would become hordes of English Tartars; and, pouring down upon your unfortified frontiers a fierce and irresistible cavalry, become masters of your governors and your counsellors,

your collectors and comptrollers, and of all the slaves that adhered to them. Such would, and in no long time must be, the effect of attempting to forbid as a crime, and to suppress as an evil, the command and blessing of Providence, "Increase and multiply." Such would be the happy result of an endeavor to keep as a lair of wild beasts that earth which God, by an express charter, has given to the children of men. Far different, and surely much wiser, has been our policy hitherto. Hitherto we have invited our people, by every kind of bounty, to fixed establishments. We have invited the husbandman to look to authority for his title. We have taught him piously to believe in the mysterious virtue of wax and parchment. We have thrown each tract of land, as it was peopled, into districts, that the ruling power should never be wholly out of sight. We have settled all we could, and we have carefully attended every settlement with government.

52. Adhering, Sir, as I do, to this policy, as well as for the reasons I have just given, I think this new project of hedging in population to be neither prudent nor practicable.

53. To impoverish the colonies in general, and in particular to arrest the noble course of their marine enterprises, would be a more easy task. I freely confess it. We have shown a disposition to a system of this kind—a disposition even to continue the restraint after the offense; looking on ourselves as rivals to our colonies, and persuaded that of course we must gain all that they shall lose. Much mischief we may cer-

tainly do. The power inadequate to all other things is often more than sufficient for this. I do not look on the direct and immediate power of the colonies to resist our violence as very formidable. In this, however, I may be mistaken. But when I consider that we have colonies for no purpose but to be serviceable to us, it seems to my poor understanding a little preposterous to make them unserviceable in order to keep them obedient. It is, in truth, nothing more than the old and, as I thought, exploded problem of tyranny, which proposes to beggar its subjects into submission. But remember, when you have completed your system of impoverishment, that nature still proceeds in her ordinary course; that discontent will increase with misery; and that there are critical moments in the fortune of all states when they who are too weak to contribute to your prosperity may be strong enough to complete your ruin. *Spoliatis arma supersunt.*

54. The temper and character which prevail in our colonies are, I am afraid, unalterable by any human art. We cannot, I fear, falsify the pedigree of this fierce people, and persuade them that they are not sprung from a nation in whose veins the blood of freedom circulates. The language in which they would hear you tell them this tale would detect the imposition; your speech would betray you. An Englishman is the unfittest person on earth to argue another Englishman into slavery.

55. I think it is nearly as little in our power to change their republican religion as their free descent, or to substitute the Roman Catholic as a penalty, or



the Church of England as an improvement. The mode of inquisition and dragooning is going out of fashion in the Old World, and I should not confide much to their efficacy in the New. The education of the Americans is also on the same unalterable bottom with their religion. You cannot persuade them to burn their books of curious science, to banish their lawyers from their courts of laws, or to quench the lights of their assemblies by refusing to choose those persons who are best read in their privileges. It would be no less impracticable to think of wholly annihilating the popular assemblies in which these lawyers sit. The army by which we must govern in their place would be far more chargeable to us, not quite so effectual, and perhaps, in the end, full as difficult to be kept in obedience.

56. With regard to the high aristocratic spirit of Virginia and the southern colonies it has been proposed, I know, to reduce it by declaring a general enfranchisement of their slaves. This project has had its advocates and panegyrists; yet I never could argue myself into any opinion of it. Slaves are often much attached to their masters. A general wild offer of liberty would not always be accepted. History furnishes few instances of it. It is sometimes as hard to persuade slaves to be free as it is to compel freemen to be slaves; and in this auspicious scheme we should have both these pleasing tasks on our hands at once. But when we talk of enfranchisement, do we not perceive that the American master may enfranchise too, and arm servile hands in defense of freedom?—a measure to which other people have had recourse more



than once, and not without success, in a desperate situation of their affairs.

57. Slaves as these unfortunate black people are, and dull as all men are from slavery, must they not a little suspect the offer of freedom from that very nation which has sold them to their present masters? from that nation one of whose causes of quarrel with those masters is their refusal to deal any more in that inhuman traffic? An offer of freedom from England would come rather oddly, shipped to them in an African vessel, which is refused an entry into the ports of Virginia or Carolina with a cargo of three hundred Angola negroes. It would be curious to see the Guinea captain attempting at the same instant to publish his proclamation of liberty, and to advertise his sale of slaves.

58. But let us suppose all these moral difficulties got over. The ocean remains. You cannot pump this dry; and as long as it continues in its present bed, so long all the causes which weaken authority by distance will continue. "Ye gods, annihilate but space and time, and make two lovers happy!" was a pious and passionate prayer; but just as reasonable as many of the serious wishes of very grave and solemn politicians.

59. If then, Sir, it seems almost desperate to think of any alterative course for changing the moral causes—and not quite easy to remove the natural—which produce prejudices irreconcilable to the late exercise of our authority, but that the spirit infallibly will continue, and, continuing, will produce such effects as now embarrass us, the second mode under consideration is to prosecute that spirit in its overt acts as *criminal*.

60. At this proposition I must pause a moment. The thing seems a great deal too big for my ideas of jurisprudence. It should seem, to my way of conceiving such matters, that there is a very wide difference in reason and policy between the mode of proceeding on the irregular conduct of scattered individuals, or even of bands of men, who disturb order within the state, and the civil dissensions which may, from time to time, on great questions, agitate the several communities which compose a great empire. It looks to me to be narrow and pedantic to apply the ordinary ideas of criminal justice to this great public contest. I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people. I cannot insult and ridicule the feelings of millions of my fellow-creatures as Sir Edward Coke insulted one excellent individual—Sir Walter Raleigh—at the bar. I hope I am not ripe to pass sentence on the gravest public bodies, intrusted with magistracies of great authority and dignity, and charged with the safety of their fellow-citizens upon the very same title that I am. I really think that for wise men this is not judicious, for sober men not decent, for minds tinctured with humanity not mild and merciful.

61. Perhaps, Sir, I am mistaken in my idea of an empire, as distinguished from a single state or kingdom. But my idea of it is this: that an empire is the aggregate of many states under one common head, whether this head be a monarch or a presiding republic. It does in such constitutions frequently happen—and nothing but the dismal, cold, dead uniformity of

servitude can prevent its happening—that the subordinate parts have many local privileges and immunities. Between these privileges and the supreme common authority, the line may be extremely nice. Of course disputes—often, too, very bitter disputes and much ill blood—will arise. But though every privilege is an exemption—in the case—from the ordinary exercise of the supreme authority, it is no denial of it. The claim of a privilege seems rather, *ex vi termini*, to imply a superior power. For to talk of the privileges of a state or of a person who has no superior is hardly any better than speaking nonsense. Now in such unfortunate quarrels among the component parts of a great political union of communities I can scarcely conceive anything more completely imprudent than for the head of the empire to insist that, if any privilege is pleaded against his will or his acts, his whole authority is denied; instantly to proclaim rebellion, to beat to arms, and to put the offending provinces under the ban. Will not this, Sir, very soon teach the provinces to make no distinctions on their part? Will it not teach them that the government against which a claim of liberty is tantamount to high treason is a government to which submission is equivalent to slavery? It may not always be quite convenient to impress dependent communities with such an idea.

62. We are, indeed, in all disputes with the colonies—by the necessity of things—the judge. It is true, Sir. But I confess that the character of judge in my own cause is a thing that frightens me. Instead of filling me with pride, I am exceedingly humbled by

it. I cannot proceed with a stern, assured, judicial confidence, until I find myself in something more like a judicial character. I must have these hesitations as long as I am compelled to recollect that, in my little reading upon such contests as these, the sense of mankind has at least as often decided against the superior as the subordinate power. Sir, let me add, too, that the opinion of my having some abstract right in my favor would not put me much at my ease in passing sentence, unless I could be sure that there were no rights which, in their exercise under certain circumstances, were not the most odious of all wrongs, and the most vexatious of all injustice. Sir, these considerations have great weight with me when I find things so circumstanced that I see the same party at once a civil litigant against me in a point of right and a culprit before me, while I sit as a criminal judge on acts of his whose moral quality is to be decided upon the merits of that very litigation. Men are every now and then put, by the complexity of human affairs, into strange situations; but justice is the same, let the judge be in what situation he will.

63. There is, Sir, also a circumstance which convinces me that this mode of criminal proceeding is not—at least in the present stage of our contest—altogether expedient; which is nothing less than the conduct of those very persons who have seemed to adopt that mode by lately declaring a rebellion in Massachusetts Bay, as they had formerly addressed to have traitors brought hither, under an act of Henry the Eighth, for trial. For though rebellion is declared, it

is not proceeded against as such, nor have any steps been taken towards the apprehension or conviction of any individual offender, either on our late or our former address; but modes of public coercion have been adopted, and such as have much more resemblance to a sort of qualified hostility towards an independent power than the punishment of rebellious subjects. All this seems rather inconsistent; but it shows how difficult it is to apply these juridical ideas to our present case.

64. In this situation let us seriously and coolly ponder. What is it we have got by all our menaces, which have been many and ferocious? What advantage have we derived from the penal laws we have passed, and which, for the time, have been severe and numerous? What advances have we made towards our object by the sending of a force which, by land and sea, is no contemptible strength? Has the disorder abated? Nothing less. When I see things in this situation, after such confident hopes, bold promises, and active exertions, I cannot, for my life, avoid a suspicion that the plan itself is not correctly right.

65. If then the removal of the causes of this spirit of American liberty be for the greater part—or rather entirely—impracticable; if the ideas of criminal process be inapplicable, or if applicable, are in the highest degree inexpedient, what way yet remains? No way is open but the third and last—to comply with the American spirit as necessary; or, if you please, to submit to it as a necessary evil.

66. If we adopt this mode, if we mean to conciliate



and concede, let us see of what nature the concession ought to be. To ascertain the nature of our concession, we must look at their complaint. The colonies complain that they have not the characteristic mark and seal of British freedom. They complain that they are taxed in a Parliament in which they are not represented. If you mean to satisfy them at all, you must satisfy them with regard to this complaint. If you mean to please any people, you must give them the boon which they ask—not what you may think better for them, but of a kind totally different. Such an act may be a wise regulation, but it is no concession; whereas our present theme is the mode of giving satisfaction.

67. Sir, I think you must perceive that I am resolved this day to have nothing at all to do with the question of the *right* of taxation. Some gentlemen startle—but it is true; I put it totally out of the question. It is less than nothing in my consideration. I do not indeed wonder, nor will you, Sir, that gentlemen of profound learning are fond of displaying it on this profound subject. But my consideration is narrow, confined, and wholly limited to the *policy* of the question. I do not examine whether the giving away a man's money be a power excepted and reserved out of the general trust of government, and how far all mankind, in all forms of polity, are entitled to an exercise of that right by the charter of nature; or whether, on the contrary, a right of taxation is necessarily involved in the general principle of legislation, and inseparable from the ordinary supreme power.



These are deep questions, where great names militate against each other, where reason is perplexed, and an appeal to authorities only thickens the confusion. For high and reverend authorities lift up their heads on both sides, and there is no sure footing in the middle. This point is the great

Serbonian bog,  
Betwixt Damiaata and Mount Casius old,  
Where armies whole have sunk.

I do not intend to be overwhelmed in that bog, though in such respectable company. The question with me is not whether you have a *right* to render your people miserable, but whether it is not your *interest* to make them happy. It is not what a lawyer tells me I may do, but what humanity, reason, and justice tell me I ought to do. Is a politic act the worse for being a generous one? Is no concession proper but that which is made from your want of right to keep what you grant? Or does it lessen the grace or dignity of relaxing in the exercise of an odious claim, because you have your evidence-room full of titles, and your magazines stuffed with arms to enforce them? What signify all those titles and all those arms? Of what avail are they, when the reason of the thing tells me that the assertion of my title is the loss of my suit, and that I could do nothing but wound myself by the use of my own weapons?

68. Such is steadfastly my opinion of the absolute necessity of keeping up the concord of this empire by a unity of spirit, though in a diversity of operations, that if I were sure the colonists had at their leaving

this country sealed a regular compact of servitude, that they had solemnly abjured all the rights of citizens, that they had made a vow to renounce all ideas of liberty for them and their posterity to all generations—yet I should hold myself obliged to conform to the temper I found universally prevalent in my own day, and to govern two million of men, impatient of servitude, on the principles of freedom. I am not determining a point of law; I am restoring tranquillity. And the general character and situation of a people must determine what sort of government is fitted for them. That point nothing else can or ought to determine.

69. My idea, therefore, without considering whether we yield as matter of right, or grant as matter of favor, is *to admit the people of our colonies into an interest in the Constitution*; and, by recording that admission in the journals of Parliament, to give them as strong an assurance as the nature of the thing will admit that we mean for ever to adhere to that solemn declaration of systematic indulgence.

70. Some years ago the repeal of a revenue act, upon its understood principle, might have served to show that we intended an unconditional abatement of the exercise of a taxing power. Such a measure was then sufficient to remove all suspicion and to give perfect content. But unfortunate events since that time may make something further necessary—and not more necessary for the satisfaction of the colonies than for the dignity and consistency of our own future proceedings.

71. I have taken a very incorrect measure of the disposition of the House if this proposal in itself would be received with dislike. I think, Sir, we have few American financiers. But our misfortune is we are too acute; we are too exquisite in our conjectures of the future, for men oppressed with such great and present evils. The more moderate among the opposers of parliamentary concession freely confess that they hope no good from taxation; but they apprehend the colonists have further views, and, if this point were conceded, they would instantly attack the trade laws. These gentlemen are convinced that this was the intention from the beginning, and the quarrel of the Americans with taxation was no more than a cloak and cover to this design. Such has been the language even of a gentleman of real moderation, and of a natural temper well adjusted to fair and equal government. I am, however, Sir, not a little surprised at this kind of discourse, whenever I hear it; and I am the more surprised on account of the arguments which I constantly find in company with it, and which are often urged from the same mouths, and on the same day.

72. For instance, when we allege that it is against reason to tax a people under so many restraints in trade as the Americans, the noble lord in the blue ribbon shall tell you that the restraints on trade are futile and useless, of no advantage to us, and of no burthen to those on whom they are imposed; that the trade to America is not secured by the acts of navigation, but by the natural and irresistible advantage of a commercial preference.

73. Such is the merit of the trade laws in this posture of the debate. But when strong internal circumstances are urged against the taxes; when the scheme is dissected; when experience and the nature of things are brought to prove, and do prove, the utter impossibility of obtaining an effective revenue from the colonies; when these things are pressed, or rather press themselves, so as to drive the advocates of colony taxes to a clear admission of the futility of the scheme—then, Sir, the sleeping trade laws revive from their trance; and this useless taxation is to be kept sacred, not for its own sake, but as a counter-guard and security of the laws of trade.

74. Then, Sir, you keep up revenue laws which are mischievous in order to preserve trade laws that are useless. Such is the wisdom of our plan in both its members. They are separately given up as of no value, and yet one is always to be defended for the sake of the other. But I cannot agree with the noble lord, nor with the pamphlet from whence he seems to have borrowed these ideas, concerning the inutility of the trade laws. For, without idolizing them, I am sure they are still, in many ways, of great use to us; and in former times they have been of the greatest. They do confine, and they do greatly narrow, the market for the Americans. But my perfect conviction of this does not help me in the least to discern how the revenue laws form any security whatsoever to the commercial regulations; or that these commercial regulations are the true ground of the quarrel; or that the giving way, in any one instance of authority, is to lose all that may remain unconceded.

75. One fact is clear and indisputable. The public and avowed origin of this quarrel was on taxation. This quarrel has indeed brought on new disputes on new questions, but certainly the least bitter, and the fewest of all, on the trade laws. To judge which of the two be the real, radical cause of quarrel, we have to see whether the commercial dispute did, in order of time, precede the dispute on taxation. There is not a shadow of evidence for it. Next, to enable us to judge whether at this moment a dislike to the trade laws be the real cause of quarrel, it is absolutely necessary to put the taxes out of the question by a repeal. See how the Americans act in this position, and then you will be able to discern correctly what is the true object of the controversy, or whether any controversy at all will remain. Unless you consent to remove this cause of difference, it is impossible, with decency, to assert that the dispute is not upon what it is avowed to be. And I would, Sir, recommend to your serious consideration whether it be prudent to form a rule for punishing people, not on their own acts, but on your conjectures. Surely it is preposterous at the very best. It is not justifying your anger by their misconduct; but it is converting your ill-will into their delinquency.

76. "But the colonies will go further." Alas! alas! when will this speculating against fact and reason end? What will quiet these panic fears which we entertain of the hostile effect of a conciliatory conduct? Is it true that no case can exist in which it is proper for the sovereign to accede to the desires of his discontented subjects? Is there anything peculiar in



this case to make a rule for itself? Is all authority of course lost when it is not pushed to the extreme? Is it a certain maxim that, the fewer causes of dissatisfaction are left by government, the more the subject will be inclined to resist and rebel?

77. All these objections being in fact no more than suspicions, conjectures, divinations, formed in defiance of fact and experience, they did not, Sir, discourage me from entertaining the idea of a conciliatory concession, founded on the principles which I have just stated.

78. In forming a plan for this purpose, I endeavored to put myself in that frame of mind which was the most natural and the most reasonable, and which was certainly the most probable means of securing me from all error. I set out with a perfect distrust of my own abilities, a total renunciation of every speculation of my own; and with a profound reverence for the wisdom of our ancestors, who have left us the inheritance of so happy a Constitution and so flourishing an empire, and, what is a thousand times more valuable, the treasury of the maxims and principles which formed the one and obtained the other.

79. During the reigns of the kings of Spain of the Austrian family, whenever they were at a loss in the Spanish councils, it was common for their statesmen to say that they ought to consult the genius of Philip the Second. The genius of Philip the Second might mislead them, and the issue of their affairs showed that they had not chosen the most perfect standard. But, Sir, I am sure that I shall not be misled when, in



a case of constitutional difficulty, I consult the genius of the English Constitution. Consulting at that oracle—it was with all due humility and piety—I found four capital examples in a similar case before me: those of Ireland, Wales, Chester, and Durham.

80. Ireland, before the English conquest, though never governed by a despotic power, had no parliament. How far the English Parliament itself was at that time modeled according to the present form is disputed among antiquarians. But we have all the reason in the world to be assured that a form of parliament such as England then enjoyed she instantly communicated to Ireland; and we are equally sure that almost every successive improvement in constitutional liberty, as fast as it was made here, was transmitted thither. The feudal baronage and the feudal knighthood, the roots of our primitive constitution, were early transplanted into that soil, and grew and flourished there. Magna Charta, if it did not give us originally the House of Commons, gave us at least a House of Commons of weight and consequence. But your ancestors did not churlishly sit down alone to the feast of Magna Charta. Ireland was made immediately a partaker. This benefit of English laws and liberties, I confess, was not at first extended to *all* Ireland. Mark the consequence. English authority and English liberties had exactly the same boundaries. Your standard could never be advanced an inch before your privileges. Sir John Davies shows, beyond a doubt, that the refusal of a general communication of these rights was the true cause why Ireland was five

hundred years in subduing ; and after the vain projects of a military government, attempted in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, it was soon discovered that nothing could make that country English in civility and allegiance but your laws and your forms of legislature. It was not English arms, but the English Constitution, that conquered Ireland. From that time Ireland has ever had a general parliament, as she had before a partial parliament. You changed the people ; you altered the religion ; but you never touched the form or the vital substance of free government in that kingdom. You deposed kings ; you restored them ; you altered the succession to theirs, as well as to your own crown ; but you never altered their constitution, the principle of which was respected by usurpation, restored with the restoration of monarchy, and established, I trust for ever, by the glorious Revolution. This has made Ireland the great and flourishing kingdom that it is ; and from a disgrace and a burthen intolerable to this nation, has rendered her a principal part of our strength and ornament. This country cannot be said to have ever formally taxed her. The irregular things done in the confusion of mighty troubles, and on the hinge of great revolutions, even if all were done that is said to have been done, form no example. If they have any effect in argument, they make an exception to prove the rule. None of your own liberties could stand a moment if the casual deviations from them at such times were suffered to be used as proofs of their nullity. By the lucrative amount of such casual breaches in the Constitution judge what

the stated and fixed rule of supply has been in that kingdom. Your Irish pensioners would starve if they had no other fund to live on than taxes granted by English authority. Turn your eyes to those popular grants from whence all your great supplies are come, and learn to respect that only source of public wealth in the British Empire.

81. My next example is Wales. This country was said to be reduced by Henry the Third. It was said more truly to be so by Edward the First. But though then conquered, it was not looked upon as any part of the realm of England. Its old constitution, whatever that might have been, was destroyed; and no good one was substituted in its place. The care of that tract was put into the hands of Lords Marchers—a form of government of a very singular kind, a strange heterogeneous monster, something between hostility and government; perhaps it has a sort of resemblance, according to the modes of those times, to that of commander-in-chief at present, to whom all civil power is granted as secondary. The manners of the Welsh nation followed the genius of the government: the people were ferocious, restive, savage, and uncultivated; sometimes composed, never pacified. Wales, within itself, was in perpetual disorder; and it kept the frontier of England in perpetual alarm. Benefits from it to the state there were none. Wales was only known to England by incursion and invasion.

82. Sir, during that state of things, Parliament was not idle. They attempted to subdue the fierce spirit of the Welsh by all sorts of rigorous laws. They

prohibited by statute the sending all sorts of arms into Wales, as you prohibit by proclamation—with something more of doubt on the legality—the sending arms to America. They disarmed the Welsh by statute, as you attempted—but still with more question on the legality—to disarm New England by an instruction. They made an act to drag offenders from Wales into England for trial, as you have done—but with more hardship—with regard to America. By another act, where one of the parties was an Englishman they ordained that his trial should be always by English. They made acts to restrain trade, as you do; and they prevented the Welsh from the use of fairs and markets, as you do the Americans from fisheries and foreign ports. In short, when the statute-book was not quite so much swelled as it is now, you find no less than fifteen acts of penal regulation on the subject of Wales.

83. Here we rub our hands—"A fine body of precedents for the authority of Parliament and the use of it!" I admit it fully; and pray add likewise to these precedents that all the while Wales rid this kingdom like an incubus, that it was an unprofitable and oppressive burthen, and that an Englishman traveling in that country could not go six yards from the high road without being murdered.

84. The march of the human mind is slow. Sir, it was not until after two hundred years discovered that, by an eternal law, providence had decreed vexation to violence, and poverty to rapine. Your ancestors did, however, at length open their eyes to the ill husbandry of injustice. They found that the tyranny

of a free people could of all tyrannies the least be endured, and that laws made against a whole nation were not the most effectual methods for securing its obedience. Accordingly, in the twenty-seventh year of Henry the Eighth, the course was entirely altered. With a preamble stating the entire and perfect rights of the crown of England, it gave to the Welsh all the rights and privileges of English subjects. A political order was established; the military power gave way to the civil; the marches were turned into counties. But that a nation should have a right to English liberties, and yet no share at all in the fundamental security of these liberties—the grant of their own property—seemed a thing so incongruous that, eight years after—that is, in the thirty-fifth of that reign—a complete and not ill-proportioned representation by counties and boroughs was bestowed upon Wales by act of Parliament. From that moment, as by a charm, the tumults subsided; obedience was restored; peace, order, and civilization followed in the train of liberty. When the day-star of the English Constitution had arisen in their hearts, all was harmony within and without.

*Simul alba nautis*

*Stella refulsit,*

*Defluit saxis agitatus umor,*

*Concidunt venti, fugiuntque nubes,*

*Et minax (quod sic voluere) ponto*

*Unda recumbit.*

**85.** The very same year the County Palatine of Chester received the same relief from its oppressions,



and the same remedy to its disorders. Before this time Chester was little less distempered than Wales. The inhabitants, without rights themselves, were the fittest to destroy the rights of others; and from thence Richard the Second drew the standing army of archers with which for a time he oppressed England. The people of Chester applied to Parliament in a petition penned as I shall read to you:

To the King our Sovereign Lord, in most humble wise shewen unto your most excellent Majesty the inhabitants of your Grace's County Palatine of Chester: (1) That where the said County Palatine of Chester is and hath been alway hitherto exempt, excluded, and separated out and from your high court of Parliament, to have any knights and burgesses within the said court; by reason whereof the said inhabitants have hitherto sustained manifold disherisons, losses, and damages, as well in their lands, goods, and bodies, as in the good, civil, and politic governance and maintenance of the commonwealth of their said county; (2) and forasmuch as the said inhabitants have always hitherto been bound by the acts and statutes made and ordained by your said Highness and your most noble progenitors, by authority of the said court, as far forth as other counties, cities, and boroughs have been, that have had their knights and burgesses within your said court of Parliament, and yet have had neither knight ne burgess there for the said County Palatine; the said inhabitants, for lack thereof, have been oftentimes touched and grieved with acts and statutes made within the said court, as well derogatory unto the most ancient jurisdictions, liberties, and privileges of your said County Palatine, as prejudicial unto the commonwealth, quietness, rest, and peace of your Grace's most bounden subjects inhabiting within the same.



86. What did Parliament with this audacious address? Reject it as a libel? Treat it as an affront to government? Spurn it as a derogation from the rights of legislature? Did they toss it over the table? Did they burn it by the hands of the common hangman? They took the petition of grievance, all rugged as it was, without softening or temperament, unpurged of the original bitterness and indignation of complaint; they made it the very preamble to their act of redress, and consecrated its principle to all ages in the sanctuary of legislation.

87. Here is my third example. It was attended with the success of the two former. Chester, civilized as well as Wales, has demonstrated that freedom, and not servitude, is the cure of anarchy; as religion, and not atheism, is the true remedy for superstition. Sir, this pattern of Chester was followed in the reign of Charles the Second with regard to the County Palatine of Durham, which is my fourth example. This county had long lain out of the pale of free legislation. So scrupulously was the example of Chester followed, that the style of the preamble is nearly the same with that of the Chester Act; and, without affecting the abstract extent of the authority of Parliament, it recognizes the equity of not suffering any considerable district, in which the British subjects may act as a body, to be taxed without their own voice in the grant.

88. Now if the doctrines of policy contained in these preambles, and the force of these examples in the acts of Parliament, avail anything, what can be said against applying them with regard to America?

Are not the people of America as much Englishmen as the Welsh? The preamble of the act of Henry the Eighth says the Welsh speaks a language no way resembling that of his Majesty's English subjects. Are the Americans not as numerous? If we may trust the learned and accurate Judge Barrington's account of North Wales, and take that as a standard to measure the rest, there is no comparison. The people cannot amount to above 200,000—not a tenth part of the number in the colonies. Is America in rebellion? Wales was hardly ever free from it. Have you attempted to govern America by penal statutes? You made fifteen for Wales. But your "legislative authority is perfect with regard to America." Was it less perfect in Wales, Chester, and Durham? But "America is virtually represented." What! does the electric force of virtual representation more easily pass over the Atlantic than pervade Wales, which lies in your neighborhood, or than Chester and Durham, surrounded by abundance of representation that is actual and palpable? But, Sir, your ancestors thought this sort of virtual representation, however ample, to be totally insufficient for the freedom of the inhabitants of territories that are so near, and comparatively so inconsiderable. How then can I think it sufficient for those which are infinitely greater and infinitely more remote?

89. You will now, Sir, perhaps imagine that I am on the point of proposing to you a scheme for a representation of the colonies in Parliament. Perhaps I might be inclined to entertain some such thought; but

a great flood stops me in my course. *Opposuit natura*. I cannot remove the eternal barriers of the creation. The thing, in that mode, I do not know to be possible. As I meddle with no theory, I do not absolutely assert the impracticability of such a representation. But I do not see my way to it; and those who have been more confident have not been more successful. However, the arm of public benevolence is not shortened; and there are often several means to the same end. What nature has disjoined in one way wisdom may unite in another. When we cannot give the benefit as we would wish, let us not refuse it altogether. If we cannot give the principal, let us find a substitute. But how? Where? What substitute?

90. Fortunately I am not obliged for the ways and means of this substitute to tax my own unproductive invention. I am not even obliged to go to the rich treasury of the fertile framers of imaginary commonwealths: not to the *Republic* of Plato, not to the *Utopia* of More, not to the *Oceana* of Harrington. It is before me; it is at my feet,

and the rude swain  
Treads daily on it with his clouted shoon.

I only wish you to recognize, for the theory, the ancient constitutional policy of this kingdom with regard to representation, as that policy has been declared in acts of Parliament; and, as to the practice, to return to that mode which a uniform experience has marked out to you as best, and in which you walked with security, advantage, and honor, until the year 1763.

91. My resolutions therefore mean to establish the equity and justice of a taxation of America by *grant*, and not by *imposition*; to mark the *legal competency* of the colony assemblies for the support of their government in peace, and for public aids in time of war; to acknowledge that this legal competency has had a *dutiful and beneficial exercise*; and that experience has shown the *benefit of their grants*, and the *futility of parliamentary taxation as a method of supply*.

92. These solid truths compose six fundamental propositions. There are three more resolutions corollary to these. If you admit the first set, you can hardly reject the others. But if you admit the first, I shall be far from solicitous whether you accept or refuse the last. I think these six massive pillars will be of strength sufficient to support the temple of British concord. I have no more doubt than I entertain of my existence that, if you admitted these, you would command an immediate peace; and, with but tolerable future management, a lasting obedience in America. I am not arrogant in this confident assurance. The propositions are all mere matters of fact; and if they are such facts as draw irresistible conclusions even in the stating, this is the power of truth, and not any management of mine.

93. Sir, I shall open the whole plan to you, together with such observations on the motions as may tend to illustrate them where they may want explanation. The first is a resolution :

That the colonies and plantations of Great Britain in North America, consisting of fourteen separate

governments, and containing two millions and upwards of free inhabitants, have not had the liberty and privilege of electing and sending any knights and burgesses, or others, to represent them in the high court of Parliament.

This is a plain matter of fact, necessary to be laid down, and—excepting the description—it is laid down in the language of the Constitution; it is taken nearly *verbatim* from acts of Parliament.

94. The second is like unto the first:

That the said colonies and plantations have been liable to, and bounden by, several subsidies, payments, rates, and taxes, given and granted by Parliament, though the said colonies and plantations have not their knights and burgesses in the said high court of Parliament, of their own election, to represent the condition of their country; by lack whereof they have been oftentimes touched and grieved by subsidies given, granted, and assented to in the said court, in a manner prejudicial to the common wealth, quietness, rest, and peace of the subjects inhabiting within the same.

95. Is this description too hot or too cold, too strong or too weak? Does it arrogate too much to the supreme legislature? Does it lean too much to the claims of the people? If it runs into any of these errors, the fault is not mine. It is the language of your own ancient acts of Parliament:

Non meus hic sermo, sed quæ præcepit Ofellus,  
Rusticus, abnormis sapiens.

It is the genuine produce of the ancient, rustic, manly, home-bred sense of this country. I did not dare to rub off a particle of the venerable rust that rather



adorns and preserves than destroys the metal. It would be a profanation to touch with a tool the stones which construct the sacred altar of peace. I would not violate with modern polish the ingenuous and noble roughness of these truly constitutional materials. Above all things, I was resolved not to be guilty of tampering—the odious vice of restless and unstable minds. I put my foot in the tracks of our forefathers, where I can neither wander nor stumble. Determining to fix articles of peace, I was resolved not to be wise beyond what was written; I was resolved to use nothing else than the form of sound words; to let others abound in their own sense, and carefully to abstain from all expressions of my own. What the law has said I say. In all things else I am silent. I have no organ but for her words. This, if it be not ingenious, I am sure is safe.

96. There are indeed words expressive of grievance in this second resolution, which those who are resolved always to be in the right will deny to contain matter of fact as applied to the present case, although Parliament thought them true with regard to the counties of Chester and Durham. They will deny that the Americans were ever “touched and grieved” with the taxes. If they consider nothing in taxes but their weight as pecuniary impositions, there might be some pretense for this denial. But men may be sorely touched and deeply grieved in their privileges as well as in their purses. Men may lose little in property by the act which takes away all their freedom. When a man is robbed of a trifle on the highway, it is not the



twopence lost that constitutes the capital outrage. This is not confined to privileges. Even ancient indulgences withdrawn, without offense on the part of those who enjoyed such favors, operate as grievances. But were the Americans, then, not touched and grieved by the taxes, in some measure, merely as taxes? If so, why were they almost all either wholly repealed or exceedingly reduced? Were they not touched and grieved even by the regulating duties of the sixth of George the Second? Else why were the duties first reduced to one-third in 1764, and afterwards to a third of that third in the year 1766? Were they not touched and grieved by the Stamp Act? I shall say they were, until that tax is revived. Were they not touched and grieved by the duties of 1767, which were likewise repealed, and which Lord Hillsborough tells you—*for the ministry!*—were laid contrary to the true principle of commerce? Is not the assurance given by that noble person to the colonies of a resolution to lay no more taxes on them an admission that taxes would touch and grieve them? Is not the resolution of the noble lord in the blue ribbon, now standing on your journals, the strongest of all proofs that parliamentary subsidies really touched and grieved them? Else why all these changes, modifications, repeals, assurances, and resolutions?

97. The next proposition is:

That, from the distance of the said colonies, and from other circumstances, no method hath hitherto been devised for procuring a representation in Parliament for the said colonies.

This is an assertion of a fact. I go no further on the paper, though, in my private judgment, a useful representation is impossible; I am sure it is not desired by them, nor ought it perhaps by us—but I abstain from opinions.

98. The fourth resolution is:

That each of the said colonies hath within itself a body, chosen, in part or in the whole, by the freemen, freeholders, or other free inhabitants thereof, commonly called the General Assembly, or General Court; with powers legally to raise, levy, and assess, according to the several usage of such colonies, duties and taxes towards defraying all sorts of public services.

99. This competence in the colony assemblies is certain. It is proved by the whole tenor of their acts of supply in all the assemblies, in which the constant style of granting is “an aid to his Majesty”; and acts granting to the crown have regularly for near a century passed the public offices without dispute. Those who have been pleased paradoxically to deny this right, holding that none but the British Parliament can grant to the crown, are wished to look to what is done, not only in the colonies, but in Ireland, in one uniform, unbroken tenor every session. Sir, I am surprised that this doctrine should come from some of the law servants of the crown. I say that if the crown could be responsible, his Majesty—but certainly the ministers, and even these law officers themselves, through whose hands the acts pass biennially in Ireland, or annually in the colonies, are in an habitual course of committing impeachable offenses. What

habitual offenders have been all presidents of the council, all secretaries of state, all first lords of trade, all attorneys and all solicitors general! However, they are safe, as no one impeaches them; and there is no ground of charge against them, except in their own unfounded theories.

100. The fifth resolution is also a resolution of fact :

That the said general assemblies, general courts, or other bodies legally qualified as aforesaid, have at sundry times freely granted several large subsidies and public aids for his Majesty's service, according to their abilities, when required thereto by letter from one of his Majesty's principal secretaries of state; and that their right to grant the same, and their cheerfulness and sufficiency in the said grants, have been at sundry times acknowledged by Parliament.

To say nothing of their great expenses in the Indian wars, and not to take their exertion in foreign ones so high as the supplies in the year 1695, not to go back to their public contributions in the year 1710—I shall begin to travel only where the journals give me light, resolving to deal in nothing but fact, authenticated by parliamentary record, and to build myself wholly on that solid basis.

101. On the 4th of April, 1748, a committee of this House came to the following resolution :

*Resolved:* That it is the opinion of this Committee that it is just and reasonable that the several provinces and colonies of Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Rhode Island be reimbursed the expenses they have been at in taking and securing to the crown of Great Britain the Island of Cape Breton and its dependencies.

These expenses were immense for such colonies. They were above £200,000 sterling—money first raised and advanced on their public credit.

102. On the 28th of January, 1756, a message from the king came to us, to this effect :

His Majesty, being sensible of the zeal and vigor with which his faithful subjects of certain colonies in North America have exerted themselves in defense of his Majesty's just rights and possessions, recommends it to this House to take the same into their consideration, and to enable his Majesty to give them such assistance as may be a *proper reward and encouragement*.

103. On the 3rd of February, 1756, the House came to a suitable resolution, expressed in words nearly the same as those of the message, but with the further addition that the money then voted was an *encouragement* to the colonies to exert themselves with vigor. It will not be necessary to go through all the testimonies which your own records have given to the truth of my resolutions; I will only refer you to the places in the journals :

Vol. xxvii.—16th and 19th May, 1757.

Vol. xxviii.—June 1st, 1758; April 26th and 30th, 1759; March 26th and 31st, and April 28th, 1760; Jan. 9th and 20th, 1761.

Vol. xxix.—Jan. 22nd and 26th, 1762; March 14th and 17th, 1763.

104. Sir, here is the repeated acknowledgment of Parliament that the colonies not only gave, but gave to satiety. This nation has formerly acknowledged two things: first, that the colonies had gone beyond

their abilities, Parliament having thought it necessary to reimburse them; secondly, that they had acted legally and laudably in their grants of money and their maintenance of troops, since the compensation is expressly given as reward and encouragement. Reward is not bestowed for acts that are unlawful, and encouragement is not held out to things that deserve reprehension. My resolution therefore does nothing more than collect into one proposition what is scattered through your journals. I give you nothing but your own; and you cannot refuse in the gross what you have so often acknowledged in detail. The admission of this, which will be so honorable to them and to you, will indeed be mortal to all the miserable stories by which the passions of the misguided people have been engaged in an unhappy system. The people heard indeed, from the beginning of these disputes, one thing continually dinned in their ears: "that reason and justice demanded that the Americans, who paid no taxes, should be compelled to contribute." How did that fact of their paying nothing stand when the taxing system began? When Mr. Grenville began to form his system of American revenue, he stated in this House that the colonies were then in debt two million six hundred thousand pounds sterling money, and was of opinion they would discharge that debt in four years. On this state those untaxed people were actually subject to the payment of taxes to the amount of six hundred and fifty thousand a year. In fact, however, Mr. Grenville was mistaken. The funds given for sinking the debt did not prove quite so am-



ple as both the colonies and he expected. The calculation was too sanguine; the reduction was not completed till some years after, and at different times in different colonies. However, the taxes after the war continued too great to bear any addition with prudence or propriety; and when the burthens imposed in consequence of former requisitions were discharged, our tone became too high to resort again to requisition. No colony, since that time, ever has had any requisition whatsoever made to it.

105. We see the sense of the crown, and the sense of Parliament, on the productive nature of a *revenue by grant*. Now search the same journals for the produce of the *revenue by imposition*. Where is it? Let us know the volume and the page. What is the gross, what is the net produce? To what service is it applied? How have you appropriated its surplus? What! can none of the many skilful index-makers that we are now employing find any trace of it? Well, let them and that rest together. But are the journals, which say nothing of the revenue, as silent on the discontent? Oh, no! a child may find it. It is the melancholy burthen and blot of every page.

106. I think, then, I am, from those journals, justified in the sixth and last resolution, which is:

That it hath been found by experience that the manner of granting the said supplies and aids by the said general assemblies hath been more agreeable to the said colonies, and more beneficial and conducive to the public service, than the mode of giving and granting aids in Parliament, to be raised and paid in the said colonies.



107. This makes the whole of the fundamental part of the plan. The conclusion is irresistible. You cannot say that you were driven by any necessity to an exercise of the utmost rights of legislature. You cannot assert that you took on yourselves the task of imposing colony taxes from the want of another legal body that is competent to the purpose of supplying the exigencies of the State without wounding the prejudices of the people. Neither is it true that the body so qualified and having that competence had neglected the duty.

108. The question now on all this accumulated matter is whether you will choose to abide by a profitable experience, or a mischievous theory; whether you choose to build on imagination, or fact; whether you prefer enjoyment, or hope; satisfaction in your subjects, or discontent.

109. If these propositions are accepted, everything which has been made to enforce a contrary system must, I take it for granted, fall along with it. On that ground I have drawn the following resolution, which, when it comes to be moved, will naturally be divided in a proper manner:

That it may be proper to repeal an act made in the seventh year of the reign of his present Majesty, intitled: *An act for granting certain duties in the British colonies and plantations in America; for allowing a drawback of the duties of customs upon the exportation from this kingdom of coffee and cocoa-nuts of the produce of the said colonies or plantations; for discontinuing the drawbacks payable on China earthenware exported to America; and for more effectually preventing*

*the clandestine running of goods in the said colonies and plantations. And that it may be proper to repeal an act made in the fourteenth year of the reign of his present Majesty, intituled: An act to discontinue, in such manner and for such time as are therein mentioned, the landing and discharging, lading or shipping, of goods, wares, and merchandise at the town and within the harbor of Boston, in the Province of Massachusetts Bay, in North America. And that it may be proper to repeal an act made in the fourteenth year of the reign of his present Majesty, intituled: An act for the impartial administration of justice, in the cases of persons questioned for any acts done by them in the execution of the law, or for the suppression of riots and tumults, in the Province of Massachusetts Bay, in New England. And that it may be proper to repeal an act, made in the fourteenth year of the reign of his present Majesty, intituled: An act for the better regulating the government of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay, in New England. And also that it may be proper to explain and amend an act made in the thirty-fifth year of the reign of King Henry the Eighth, intituled: An act for the trial of treasons committed out of the King's dominions.*

110. I wish, Sir, to repeal the Boston Port Bill, because—independently of the dangerous precedent of suspending the rights of the subject during the King's pleasure—it was passed, as I apprehend, with less regularity, and on more partial principles, than it ought. The corporation of Boston was not heard before it was condemned. Other towns, full as guilty as she was, have not had their ports blocked up. Even the Restraining Bill of the present session does not go to the length of the Boston Port Act. The same

ideas of prudence which induced you not to extend equal punishment to equal guilt, even when you were punishing, induced me—who mean not to chastise, but to reconcile—to be satisfied with the punishment already partially inflicted.

111. Ideas of prudence and accommodation to circumstances prevent you from taking away the charters of Connecticut and Rhode Island, as you have taken away that of Massachusetts Colony, though the crown has far less power in the two former provinces than it enjoyed in the latter, and though the abuses have been fully as great and as flagrant in the exempted as in the punished. The same reasons of prudence and accommodation have weight with me in restoring the charter of Massachusetts Bay. Besides, Sir, the act which changes the charter of Massachusetts is in many particulars so exceptionable that, if I did not wish absolutely to repeal, I would by all means desire to alter it, as several of its provisions tend to the subversion of all public and private justice. Such, among others, is the power in the governor to change the sheriff at his pleasure, and to make a new returning-officer for every special cause. It is shameful to behold such a regulation standing among English laws.

112. The act for bringing persons accused of committing murder under the orders of government to England for trial is but temporary. That act has calculated the probable duration of our quarrel with the colonies, and is accommodated to that supposed duration. I would hasten the happy moment of recon-

ciliation, and therefore must, on my principle, get rid of that most justly obnoxious act.

113. The act of Henry the Eighth, for the trial of treasons, I do not mean to take away, but to confine it to its proper bounds and original intention; to make it expressly for trial of treasons—and the greatest treasons may be committed—in places where the jurisdiction of the crown does not extend.

114. Having guarded the privileges of local legislature, I would next secure to the colonies a fair and unbiased judicature, for which purpose, Sir, I propose the following resolution:

That, from the time when the general assembly or general court of any colony or plantation in North America shall have appointed, by act of assembly duly confirmed, a settled salary to the offices of the chief justice and other judges of the superior court, it may be proper that the said chief justice and other judges of the superior courts of such colony shall hold his and their office and offices during their good behavior; and shall not be removed therefrom but when the said removal shall be adjudged by his Majesty in council, upon a hearing on complaint from the general assembly, or on a complaint from the governor, or council, or the house of representatives severally, of the colony in which the said chief justice and other judges have exercised the said offices.

115. The next resolution relates to the courts of admiralty. It is this:

That it may be proper to regulate the courts of admiralty, or vice-admiralty, authorized by the fifteenth chapter of the fourth of George the Third, in

such a manner as to make the same more commodious to those who sue or are sued in the said courts, and to provide for the more decent maintenance of the judges in the same.

116. These courts I do not wish to take away; they are in themselves proper establishments. This court is one of the capital securities of the Act of Navigation. The extent of its jurisdiction, indeed, has been increased; but this is altogether as proper, and is indeed on many accounts more eligible, where new powers were wanted, than a court absolutely new. But courts incommodiously situated in effect deny justice, and a court partaking in the fruits of its own condemnation is a robber. The Congress complain, and complain justly, of this grievance.

117. These are the three consequential propositions. I have thought of two or three more, but they come rather too near detail and to the province of executive government, which I wish Parliament always to superintend, never to assume. If the first six are granted, congruity will carry the latter three. If not, the things that remain unrepealed will be, I hope, rather unseemly encumbrances on the building than very materially detrimental to its strength and stability.

118. Here, Sir, I should close; but I plainly perceive some objections remain, which I ought, if possible, to remove. The first will be that, in resorting to the doctrine of our ancestors as contained in the preamble to the Chester Act, I prove too much: that the grievance from a want of representation, stated in that



preamble, goes to the whole of legislation as well as to taxation; and that the colonies, grounding themselves upon that doctrine, will apply it to all parts of legislative authority.

119. To this objection, with all possible deference and humility, and wishing as little as any man living to impair the smallest particle of our supreme authority, I answer, that *the words are the words of Parliament, and not mine*; and that all false and inconclusive inferences drawn from them are not mine, for I heartily disclaim any such inference. I have chosen the words of an act of Parliament which Mr. Grenville, surely a tolerably zealous and very judicious advocate for the sovereignty of Parliament, formerly moved to have read at your table in confirmation of his tenets. It is true that Lord Chatham considered these preambles as declaring strongly in favor of his opinions. He was a no less powerful advocate for the privileges of the Americans. Ought I not from hence to presume that these preambles are as favorable as possible to both, when properly understood; favorable both to the rights of Parliament, and to the privilege of the dependencies of this crown? But, Sir, the object of grievance in my resolution I have not taken from the Chester, but from the Durham Act, which confines the hardship of want of representation to the case of subsidies, and which therefore falls in exactly with the case of the colonies. But whether the unrepresented counties were, *de jure* or *de facto*, bound the preambles do not accurately distinguish, nor indeed was it necessary; for whether *de jure* or *de facto*, the legis-



lature thought the exercise of the power of taxing as of right, or as of fact without right, equally a grievance and equally oppressive.

120. I do not know that the colonies have, in any general way or in any cool hour, gone much beyond the demand of immunity in relation to taxes. It is not fair to judge of the temper or dispositions of any man, or any set of men, when they are composed and at rest, from their conduct or their expressions in a state of disturbance and irritation. It is besides a very great mistake to imagine that mankind follow up practically any speculative principle, either of government or of freedom, as far as it will go in argument and logical illation. We Englishmen stop very short of the principles upon which we support any given part of our Constitution, or even the whole of it together. I could easily, if I had not already tired you, give you very striking and convincing instances of it. This is nothing but what is natural and proper. All government—indeed every human benefit and enjoyment, every virtue, and every prudent act—is founded on compromise and barter. We balance inconveniences; we give and take; we remit some rights that we may enjoy others; and we choose rather to be happy citizens than subtle disputants. As we must give away some natural liberty to enjoy civil advantages, so we must sacrifice some civil liberties for the advantages to be derived from the communion and fellowship of a great empire. But in all fair dealings the thing bought must bear some proportion to the purchase paid. None will barter away the immediate jewel of his soul.

Though a great house is apt to make slaves haughty, yet it is purchasing a part of the artificial importance of a great empire too dear to pay for it all essential rights and all the intrinsic dignity of human nature. None of us who would not risk his life rather than fall under a government purely arbitrary. But although there are some amongst us who think our Constitution wants many improvements to make it a complete system of liberty, perhaps none who are of that opinion would think it right to aim at such improvement by disturbing his country and risking everything that is dear to him. In every arduous enterprise we consider what we are to lose as well as what we are to gain; and the more and better stake of liberty every people possess, the less they will hazard in a vain attempt to make it more. These are *the cords of man*. Man acts from adequate motives relative to his interest, and not on metaphysical speculations. Aristotle, the great master of reasoning, cautions us, and with great weight and propriety, against this species of delusive geometrical accuracy in moral arguments, as the most fallacious of all sophistry.

121. The Americans will have no interest contrary to the grandeur and glory of England, when they are not oppressed by the weight of it; and they will rather be inclined to respect the acts of a superintending legislature when they see them the acts of that power which is itself the security, not the rival, of their secondary importance. In this assurance my mind most perfectly acquiesces; and I confess I feel not the least alarm from the discontents which are to arise from

putting people at their ease; nor do I apprehend the destruction of this empire from giving, by an act of free grace and indulgence, to two millions of my fellow-citizens some share of those rights upon which I have always been taught to value myself.

122. It is said, indeed, that this power of granting, vested in American assemblies, would dissolve the unity of the empire; which was preserved entire, although Wales and Chester and Durham were added to it. Truly, Mr. Speaker, I do not know what this "unity" means, nor has it ever been heard of, that I know, in the constitutional policy of this country. The very idea of subordination of parts excludes this notion of simple and undivided unity. England is the head; but she is not the head and the members too. Ireland has ever had from the beginning a separate, but not an independent, legislature, which, far from distracting, promoted the union of the whole. Everything was sweetly and harmoniously disposed through both islands for the conservation of English dominion and the communication of English liberties. I do not see that the same principles might not be carried into twenty islands, and with the same good effect. This is my model with regard to America, as far as the internal circumstances of the two countries are the same. I know no other unity of this empire than I can draw from its example during these periods when it seemed to my poor understanding more united than it is now, or than it is likely to be by the present methods.

123. But since I speak of these methods, I recol-

lect, Mr. Speaker, almost too late, that I promised, before I finished, to say something of the proposition of the noble lord on the floor, which has been so lately received, and stands on your journals. I must be deeply concerned, whenever it is my misfortune to continue a difference with the majority of this House. But as the reasons for that difference are my apology for thus troubling you, suffer me to state them in a very few words. I shall compress them into as small a body as I possibly can, having already debated that matter at large when the question was before the committee.

124. First, then, I cannot admit that proposition of a ransom by auction, because it is a mere project. It is a thing new, unheard of, supported by no experience, justified by no analogy, without example of our ancestors or root in the Constitution. It is neither regular parliamentary taxation nor colony grant. *Experimentum in corpore vili* is a good rule, which will ever make me adverse to any trial of experiments on what is certainly the most valuable of all subjects, the peace of this empire.

125. Secondly, it is an experiment which must be fatal in the end to our Constitution. For what is it but a scheme for taxing the colonies in the antechamber of the noble lord and his successors? To settle the quotas and proportions in this House is clearly impossible. You, Sir, may flatter yourself you shall sit a state auctioneer, with your hammer in your hand, and knock down to each colony as it bids. But to settle—on the plan laid down by the noble lord—the true

proportional payment for four or five and twenty governments, according to the absolute and the relative wealth of each, and according to the British proportion of wealth and burthen, is a wild and chimerical notion. This new taxation must therefore come in by the back-door of the Constitution. Each quota must be brought to this House ready formed; you can neither add nor alter. You must register it. You can do nothing further. For on what grounds can you deliberate either before or after the proposition? You cannot hear the counsel for all these provinces, quarreling each on its own quantity of payment and its proportion to others. If you should attempt it, the Committee of Provincial Ways and Means, or by whatever other name it will delight to be called, must swallow up all the time of Parliament.

126. Thirdly, it does not give satisfaction to the complaint of the colonies. They complain that they are taxed without their consent; you answer that you will fix the sum at which they shall be taxed—that is, you give them the very grievance for the remedy. You tell them, indeed, that you will leave the mode to themselves. I really beg pardon—it gives me pain to mention it—but you must be sensible that you will not perform this part of the compact. For suppose the colonies were to lay the duties which furnished their contingent upon the importation of your manufacturers; you know you would never suffer such a tax to be laid. You know, too, that you would not suffer many other modes of taxation. So that, when you come to explain yourself, it will be found that you



will neither leave to themselves the quantum nor the mode—nor indeed anything. The whole is delusion from one end to the other.

127. Fourthly, this method of ransom by auction, unless it be *universally* accepted, will plunge you into great and inextricable difficulties. In what year of our Lord are the proportions of payments to be settled? To say nothing of the impossibility that colony agents should have general powers of taxing the colonies at their discretion, consider, I implore you, that the communication by special messages, and orders between these agents and their constituents on each variation of the case, when the parties come to contend together and to dispute on their relative proportions, will be a matter of delay, perplexity, and confusion that never can have an end.

128. If all the colonies do not appear at the outcry, what is the condition of those assemblies who offer, by themselves or their agents, to tax themselves up to your ideas of their proportion? The refractory colonies, who refuse all composition, will remain taxed only to your old impositions, which, however grievous in principle, are trifling as to production. The obedient colonies in this scheme are heavily taxed; the refractory remain unburthened. What will you do? Will you lay new and heavier taxes by Parliament on the disobedient? Pray consider in what way you can do it. You are perfectly convinced that, in the way of taxing, you can do nothing but at the ports. Now suppose it is Virginia that refuses to appear at your auction, while Maryland and North Carolina bid hand-



somely for their ransom, and are taxed to your quota—how will you put these colonies on a par? Will you tax the tobacco of Virginia? If you do, you give its death-wound to your English revenue at home, and to one of the very greatest articles of your own foreign trade. If you tax the import of that rebellious colony, what do you tax but your own manufactures, or the goods of some other obedient and already well-taxed colony? Who has said one word on this labyrinth of detail, which bewilders you more and more as you enter into it? Who has presented, who can present you, with a clue to lead you out of it? I think, Sir, it is impossible that you should not recollect that the colony bounds are so implicated in one another—you know it by your other experiments in the bill for prohibiting the New England fishery—that you can lay no possible restraints on almost any of them which may not be presently eluded, if you do not confound the innocent with the guilty, and burthen those whom, upon every principle, you ought to exonerate. He must be grossly ignorant of America who thinks that, without falling into this confusion of all rules of equity and policy, you can restrain any single colony, especially Virginia and Maryland, the central and most important of them all.

**129.** Let it also be considered that either in the present confusion you settle a permanent contingent, which will and must be trifling, and then you have no effectual revenue; or you change the quota at every exigency, and then on every new repartition you will have a new quarrel.

130. Reflect besides that when you have fixed a quota for every colony, you have not provided for prompt and punctual payment. Suppose one, two, five, ten years' arrears. You cannot issue a treasury extent against the failing colony. You must make new Boston Port Bills, new restraining laws, new acts for dragging men to England for trial. You must send out new fleets, new armies. All is to begin again. From this day forward the empire is never to know an hour's tranquillity. An intestine fire will be kept alive in the bowels of the colonies, which one time or other must consume this whole empire. I allow indeed that the empire of Germany raises her revenue and her troops by quotas and contingents; but the revenue of the empire, and the army of the empire, is the worst revenue and the worst army in the world.

131. Instead of a standing revenue you will therefore have a perpetual quarrel. Indeed the noble lord, who proposed this project of a ransom by auction, seemed himself to be of that opinion. His project was rather designed for breaking the union of the colonies than for establishing a revenue. He confessed he apprehended that his proposal *would not be to their taste*. I say, this scheme of disunion seems to be at the bottom of the project; for I will not suspect that the noble lord meant nothing but merely to delude the nation by an airy phantom which he never intended to realize. But whatever his views may be, as I propose the peace and union of the colonies as the very foundation of my plan, it cannot accord with one whose foundation is perpetual discord.

132. Compare the two. This I offer to give you is plain and simple; the other full of perplexed and intricate mazes. This is mild; that harsh. This is found by experience effectual for its purposes; the other is a new project. This is universal; the other calculated for certain colonies only. This is immediate in its conciliatory operation; the other remote, contingent, full of hazard. Mine is what becomes the dignity of a ruling people—gratuitous, unconditional, and not held out as matter of bargain and sale. I have done my duty in proposing it to you. I have indeed tired you by a long discourse; but this is the misfortune of those to whose influence nothing will be conceded, and who must win every inch of their ground by argument. You have heard me with goodness. May you decide with wisdom! For my part, I feel my mind greatly disburthened by what I have done today. I have been the less fearful of trying your patience because on this subject I mean to spare it altogether in future. I have this comfort, that in every stage of the American affairs I have steadily opposed the measures that have produced the confusion, and may bring on the destruction, of this empire. I now go so far as to risk a proposal of my own. If I cannot give peace to my country, I give it to my conscience.

133. "But what," says the financier, "is peace to us without money? Your plan gives us no revenue." No! But it does; for it secures to the subject the power of REFUSAL—the first of all revenues. Experience is a cheat, and fact a liar, if this power in the

subject of proportioning his grant, or of not granting at all, has not been found the richest mine of revenue ever discovered by the skill or by the fortune of man. It does not indeed vote you £152,750:11:2¾ths, nor any other paltry, limited sum; but it gives the strong box itself, the fund, the bank, from whence only revenues can arise amongst a people sensible of freedom: *Posita luditur arca*. Cannot you in England, cannot you at this time of day, cannot you, a House of Commons, trust to the principle which has raised so mighty a revenue, and accumulated a debt of near 140 millions in this country? Is this principle to be true in England, and false everywhere else? Is it not true in Ireland? Has it not hitherto been true in the colonies? Why should you presume that in any country a body duly constituted for any function will neglect to perform its duty, and abdicate its trust? Such a presumption would go against all governments in all modes. But, in truth, this dread of penury of supply from a free assembly has no foundation in nature. For first observe that, besides the desire which all men have naturally of supporting the honor of their own government, that sense of dignity and that security to property, which ever attends freedom, has a tendency to increase the stock of the free community. Most may be taken where most is accumulated. And what is the soil or climate where experience has not uniformly proved that the voluntary flow of heaped-up plenty, bursting from the weight of its own rich luxuriance, has ever run with a more copious stream of revenue than could be squeezed from the dry husks

of oppressed indigence, by the straining of all the politic machinery in the world?

**134.** Next, we know that parties must ever exist in a free country. We know, too, that the emulations of such parties, their contradictions, their reciprocal necessities, their hopes, and their fears, must send them all in their turns to him that holds the balance of the state. The parties are the gamesters; but government keeps the table, and is sure to be the winner in the end. When this game is played, I really think it is more to be feared that the people will be exhausted than that government will not be supplied. Whereas whatever is got by acts of absolute power ill obeyed because odious, or by contracts ill kept because constrained, will be narrow, feeble, uncertain, and precarious.

Ease would retract

Vows made in pain, as violent and void.

**135.** I, for one, protest against compounding our demands: I declare against compounding, for a poor limited sum, the immense, ever-growing, eternal debt, which is due to generous government from protected freedom. And so may I speed in the great object I propose to you, as I think it would not only be an act of injustice, but would be the worst economy in the world, to compel the colonies to a sum certain, either in the way of ransom or in the way of compulsory compact.

**136.** But to clear up my ideas on this subject: a revenue from America transmitted hither—do not delude yourselves—you never can receive it; no, not a



shilling. We have experience that from remote countries it is not to be expected. If, when you attempted to extract revenue from Bengal, you were obliged to return in loan what you had taken in imposition, what can you expect from North America? For certainly, if ever there was a country qualified to produce wealth, it is India; or an institution fit for the transmission, it is the East India Company. America has none of these aptitudes. If America gives you taxable objects on which you lay your duties here, and gives you at the same time a surplus by a foreign sale of her commodities to pay the duties on these objects which you tax at home, she has performed her part to the British revenue. But with regard to her own internal establishments, she may—I doubt not she will—contribute in moderation. I say in moderation; for she ought not to be permitted to exhaust herself. She ought to be reserved to a war—the weight of which, with the enemies that we are most likely to have, must be considerable in her quarter of the globe. There she may serve you, and serve you essentially.

137. For that service—for all service, whether of revenue, trade, or empire—my trust is in her interest in the British Constitution. My hold of the colonies is in the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges, and equal protection. These are ties which, though light as air, are as strong as links of iron. Let the colonies always keep the idea of their civil rights associated with your government—they will cling and grapple to you, and no force under heaven will be of

power to tear them from their allegiance. But let it be once understood that your government may be one thing, and their privileges another; that these two things may exist without any mutual relation—the cement is gone, the cohesion is loosened, and everything hastens to decay and dissolution. As long as you have the wisdom to keep the sovereign authority of this country as the sanctuary of liberty, the sacred temple consecrated to our common faith, wherever the chosen race and sons of England worship freedom, they will turn their faces towards you. The more they multiply, the more friends you will have; the more ardently they love liberty, the more perfect will be their obedience. Slavery they can have anywhere. It is a weed that grows in every soil. They may have it from Spain; they may have it from Prussia. But, until you become lost to all feeling of your true interest and your natural dignity, freedom they can have from none but you. This is the commodity of price, of which you have the monopoly. This is the true Act of Navigation, which binds to you the commerce of the colonies, and through them secures to you the wealth of the world. Deny them this participation of freedom, and you break that sole bond which originally made, and must still preserve, the unity of the empire. Do not entertain so weak an imagination as that your registers and your bonds, your affidavits and your sufferances, your cockets and your clearances, are what form the great securities of your commerce. Do not dream that your letters of office and your instructions and your suspending clauses are the things that

hold together the great contexture of the mysterious whole. These things do not make your government. Dead instruments, passive tools as they are, it is the spirit of English communion that gives all their life and efficacy to them. It is the spirit of the English Constitution, which, infused through the mighty mass, pervades, feeds, unites, invigorates, vivifies every part of the empire, even down to the minutest member.

138. Is it not the same virtue which does everything for us here in England? Do you imagine then, that it is the Land Tax Act which raises your revenue? that it is the annual vote in the Committee of Supply which gives you your army? or that it is the Mutiny Bill which inspires it with bravery and discipline? No! surely no! It is the love of the people, it is their attachment to their government from the sense of the deep stake they have in such a glorious institution, which gives you your army and your navy, and infuses into both that liberal obedience without which your army would be a base rabble and your navy nothing but rotten timber.

139. All this, I know well enough, will sound wild and chimerical to the profane herd of those vulgar and mechanical politicians who have no place among us—a sort of people who think that nothing exists but what is gross and material, and who therefore, far from being qualified to be directors of the great movement of empire, are not fit to turn a wheel in the machine. But to men truly initiated and rightly taught, these ruling and master principles, which in the opinion of such men as I have mentioned have no substantial

existence, are in truth everything, and all in all. Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom; and a great empire and little minds go ill together. If we are conscious of our situation, and glow with zeal to fill our place as becomes our station and ourselves, we ought to auspicate all our public proceedings on America with the old warning of the church, *Sursum corda!* We ought to elevate our minds to the greatness of that trust to which the order of providence has called us. By adverting to the dignity of this high calling our ancestors have turned a savage wilderness into a glorious empire, and have made the most extensive, and the only honorable conquests, not by destroying, but by promoting, the wealth, the number, the happiness of the human race. Let us get an American revenue as we have got an American empire. English privileges have made it all that it is; English privileges alone will make it all it can be.

140. In full confidence of this unalterable truth, I now—*quod felix faustumque sit!*—lay the first stone of the Temple of Peace; and I move you

That the colonies and plantations of Great Britain in North America, consisting of fourteen separate governments, and containing two millions and upwards of free inhabitants, have not had the liberty and privilege of electing and sending any knights and burgesses, or others, to represent them in the high court of Parliament.

IMPORTANT COLLATERAL READINGS

FROM THE SPEECHES OF EDMUND BURKE, WILLIAM PITT,  
AND CHARLES JAMES FOX; FROM THE HISTORIANS  
TREVELYAN AND LECKY; AND FROM THE  
PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY, 1775-1776



# I

## HOW THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION WAS REGARDED IN ENGLAND

FROM G. O. TREVELYAN'S AMERICAN REVOLUTION

It must never be forgotten that many Englishmen from the first—and in the end a decided, and indeed a very large, majority among them—regarded the contest which was being fought out in America not as a foreign war, but as a civil war in which English liberty was at stake. They held that a policy had been deliberately initiated, and during half a generation had been resolutely pursued, of which the avowed object was to make the Royal power dominant in the State; and the historians in highest repute, who since have treated of those times, unreservedly maintain the same view. That policy had now<sup>1</sup> prevailed; and Personal Government, from a mischievous theory, had grown into a portentous reality. The victory of the Crown had been preceded by an epoch of continuous and bitter strife, every stage in which was marked by deplorable incidents. The publication through the press of opinions obnoxious to the Court had been punished with unsparing severity. The right of constituents to elect a person of their choice had been denied in words, and repeatedly violated in practice. The benches of the Lords and the Commons swarmed with an ever increasing band of placemen and pensioners subsidized by

<sup>1</sup>In the spring of 1777.

the King; and these gentlemen well knew the work which the paymaster expected of them. Their vocation was to harass any minister who conceived that he owed a duty to the people as well as to the Sovereign; and to betray and ruin him if he proved incorrigible in his notions of patriotism. The most famous English statesmen—all, it is not too much to say, who are now remembered with pride by Englishmen of every party—were shut out from the opportunity, and even from the hope, of office; and our national qualities of manliness and independence had come to be a standing disqualification for employment in the nation's service. At last the Cabinet had picked a quarrel with the colonies over the very same question which convulsed England in the days of Strafford and the ship-money. In order to vindicate the doctrine that taxation might be imposed without representation, the servants of the Crown, or rather its bondsmen (for the Prime Minister, and the most respectable of his colleagues, were in this matter acting under compulsion, and against their consciences), had undertaken to coerce the communities in America with fire and sword, and to visit individuals with the extreme penalties of rebellion. It followed, as a natural and certain consequence, that the party, which resented the encroachments of the Crown at home, sincerely and universally entertained a belief which influenced their whole view of the colonial controversy. That belief had been placed on record, in quiet but expressive language, by a nobleman who, in his honored age, lived among us as the last of the old Whigs. Lord Albe-

marle distinctly states that in 1774, and for some years afterwards, the Opposition were possessed by "a deep and well-grounded conviction that, if despotism were once established in America, arbitrary government would at least be attempted in the mother country."

Those apprehensions were shared by men whose judgment cannot lightly be set aside, and the strength of whose patriotism was many degrees above proof. Chatham, when he spoke in public, dwelt mainly upon the rights of the colonists, the duty of England, and the appalling military dangers which would result to the Empire if those rights were invaded and that duty ignored. With the instinct of a great orator, he did not willingly introduce fresh debatable matter into a controversy where he had so many sufficient and self-evident arguments ready to his hand; but his private correspondence clearly indicates that the keenness of his emotion, and the warmth of his advocacy, were closely connected with a profound belief that, if America were subjugated, Britain would not long be free. Would to heaven, he wrote, that England was not doomed to bind round her own hands, and wear patiently, the chains which she was forging for her colonies! And then he quoted, with telling effect, the passage in which Juvenal described how the spread of servility among the Roman people, and the corruption of their public spirit, avenged the wrongs of the subject world upon the conquerors themselves.

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Horace Walpole, with whom the chief men of both parties freely conversed, had no doubt whither the

road led which the stronger, and the worse, members of the Cabinet, joyfully followed; and down which the less perverse, and the more timid, were irresistibly driven. He never was easy about the political future of his country, until North's Government fell, and the danger disappeared. During the winter when Howe and Washington were contending in the Jerseys, Walpole complained that his life at present consisted in being wished joy over the defeat and slaughter of fellow countrymen, who were fighting for his liberty as well as for their own. Thirty months afterwards he spoke still more gloomily. It was bad enough, he said, to be at war with France and Spain because we would not be content to let America send us half the wealth of the world in her own way, instead of in the way that pleased George Grenville and Charles Townshend. But the subversion of a happy Constitution, by the hands of domestic enemies, was a worse fate than any which we could suffer from the foreigner; and that fate, unless the nation recovered its senses, only too surely awaited us.

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When once the American war broke out, it became evident to them<sup>1</sup> that there were no lengths to which the King was not prepared to go: and there were most certainly none to which they themselves would not eagerly follow. Testimony to that effect was given by a witness who knew, as well as anybody, what the Jacobites were thinking. In one of the last letters which he wrote, David Hume, with the solemnity of a

<sup>1</sup>The Jacobite Tories.

dying man, prophesied that, if the Court carried the day in America, the English Constitution would infallibly perish.

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“It appears,” Frederick the Great wrote in August, 1775, “from all I hear, that the ancient British spirit has almost entirely eclipsed itself, and that everything tends to a change in the form of government, so that the old constitution will exist only on the surface, and the nation in effect will be nearer slavery than in any preceding reign.”

The Abbé Morellet wrote to Lord Shelburne in 1782: “Yes, my Lord, in spite of the war that divides us, I am glad to see your country better administered. I rejoice, in my quality of citizen of the world, that a great people should resume their true place; should regain a clear view of their real interests; and should employ their resources, not in the pursuit of an end which cannot be attained, but for the conservation of that wealth and influence which are naturally their due, and which, for the sake of the world at large, it is all-important that they should continue to possess. If the independence of America had perished, your constitution would have been overthrown, and your freedom lost.”

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The Duke of Richmond wrote to Burke from Paris in 1776: “Who knows that a time may not come when a retreat to this country may not be a happy thing to have? We now hold our liberties merely by the magnanimity of the best of kings, who will not make use of the opportunity he has to seize them; for he has it in



his power, with the greatest ease and quiet, to imitate the King of Sweden. I have not the least doubt but that his faithful peers and commons would by degrees—or at once if he liked it better—vote him complete despotism. I fear I see the time approaching when the English, after having been guilty of every kind of meanness and corruption, will at last own themselves, like the Swedes, unworthy to be free. When that day comes, our situation will be worse than France. Young despotism, like a boy broke loose from school, will indulge itself in every excess. Besides, if there is a contest, though it be a feeble one, I, or mine, may be among the proscribed. If such an event should happen, and America not be open to receive us, France is some retreat, and a peerage here is something.”

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Among London newspapers the largest, the most attractive, and quite incomparably the most in request, were opposed to the American policy of the Cabinet. . . . The London “Evening Post,” the “Public Advertiser,” the “Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser,” and the “Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser,” gave the Court and the Bedfords superabundant cause to regret that they had not left Wilkes and his newspaper alone.

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In estimating the balance of British opinion during the American Revolution great importance must be attached to the views expressed by the newspapers; but not less significant was the impunity with which those views were given to the world. It has happened



more than once that an Administration, already on the decline, has become powerful and popular when a war broke out, and has retained its advantage so long as that war endured; and, under the Georges, an accession of strength, and of public favor, meant a great deal more to a Government than it means now. A war ministry then, which had the country with it, was terribly formidable to political opponents at home. It might have seemed likely that, after the colonists had recourse to arms, journalists and pamphleteers who went counter to the royal policy would soon have had a very bad time in England; but exactly the opposite result ensued. During the first fourteen years of George the Third, the ministerial censorship of the Press had been continuous, inquisitorial, and harsh almost to barbarity. The most exalted magistrates had placed themselves at the service of the executive with culpable facility; not for the first time in our history. Roger North, in his picturesque and instructive family biographies, reports how, throughout the civil dissensions of the seventeenth century, the time of the King's Bench was taken up with factious contentions; and he speaks of that Court as a place where more news than law was stirring. The law, as there laid down by Lord Mansfield in 1763, was fraught with grave consequences to all men who gained their livelihood by writing copy, or by setting up type. Informations began to rain like hail upon authors, editors, publishers, and printers. Crushing fines, protracted terms of imprisonment, and the open shame of the pillory were, for several years to come, the portion of those

who criticized the Cabinet in earnest. Their plight would have been hopeless if they had not sometimes found a refuge in the Common Pleas, where the president of the tribunal was Lord Chief Justice Pratt; who subsequently in the House of Peers, as Lord Camden, ably supported Lord Chatham's endeavors to reconcile Great Britain and America. Pratt, acting in the true spirit of the law wherever liberty was at hazard, and audaciously advancing the limits of his own jurisdiction when he otherwise could not rescue a victim, nobly vindicated the ancient reputation of his Court. As time went on, the ministerial majority in the House of Commons joined in the hunt; and Parliamentary Privilege, which had been devised for the protection of freedom, was perverted, amid scenes of scandalous uproar and irregularity, into an engine of tyranny.

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Ministers who had pursued such courses in a time of peace—when they could not excuse their arbitrary measures by the plea of national danger, or the necessity for preserving an appearance of national unanimity might have been expected, when a war was raging, to have strained and overridden legality more unscrupulously than ever for the purpose of paying out old scores, and repressing fresh ebullitions of hostile criticism. But, though the clamor against the King and his ministers waxed ever more shrill and more pertinacious, the censorship seemed to have lost its nerve, and the Opposition press went forward on its boisterous way unmenaced and almost unmolested. Political

trials became infrequent, and, after a while, ceased. The voice of the Attorney-General calling for vengeance—now upon grave constitutional essayists, or vehement champions of freedom; now upon some miserable bookseller's hack, and the compositors who had deciphered and printed his lucubrations—was hushed and silent. Men wrote what they thought and felt, in such terms as their indignation prompted and their taste permitted. However crude and violent might be the language in which the newspapers couched their invectives, the legal advisers of the Government, when it came to a question of prosecution, were awed and scared by the consciousness that there existed immense multitudes of people for whom diatribes against the Court and the Cabinet could not be too highly flavored.

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From 1775 onward the newspapers went straight for the King. The Empire, they declared, was under the direction of a bigoted and vindictive prince, whose administration was odious and corrupt in every part; so that the struggles of a handful of his subjects, made furious by oppression, had proclaimed the weakness of that Empire to the world. Those precise words were printed at the beginning of 1776; and towards the end of the year a Christian Soldier addressed George the Third in a sermon of a couple of columns, headed by the first seven verses of the Sixth Chapter in the Wisdom of Solomon. The denunciation against wicked rulers, which those verses contain, was a sufficient sermon in itself; but the preacher did not shrink from the duty of pressing his text home. "Have you not,"

he asked the King, "called your own pretensions the necessity of the State? Have you chosen for your Ministers and Counsellors men of the greatest piety and courage and understanding? Have you not dreaded to have such around you, because they would not flatter you, and would oppose your unjust passions and your misbecoming designs?" And so the argument continued through a score of interrogatives, any one of which, five years before, or ten years before, would have sent the author, and his printer, and the printer's devils as well, to think out the answer to that string of irreverent queries in the solitude of Newgate.

Whenever the Ministry was mentioned in connection with the King, it was not for the purpose of shielding him from responsibility, but in order to upbraid him for having entrusted the government of the country to such a pack of reprobates. There could not, according to one journalist, be anything more unfortunate for a nation than for its Prince not to have one honest man about him. "Americans," wrote another, "are totally indifferent about every change of Ministers which may happen in the Court system. They care not who comes in. They know that a change of men implies nothing more than knaves succeeding to that power which former knaves were fools enough to abuse."

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A certain sense of comradeship between the two great branches of our people, which the war had not extinguished, was manifested in the feelings entertained by many Englishmen in England towards the

Revolutionary leaders who had displayed energy and courage, and particularly towards such as had fallen in battle. After the repulse of the Americans before Quebec, Montgomery's body, by General Carleton's order, was borne into the town with every mark of reverence and regret, and buried with military honors. When the tidings of his death reached the House of Commons, the most powerful orators, not on one side only, praised his virtues, and lamented his fate. Burke spoke of him with admiration. Lord North acknowledged that he was brave, able, and humane, and deplored that those generous epithets must be applied to one who had been a rebel; to which Charles Fox retorted that Montgomery was a rebel only in the same sense as were the old Parliament men of a hundred years ago, to whom those he saw around him owed it that they had a House of Commons in which to sit.

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The sentiments which were current in one famous region of industry and enterprise have been recorded by a witness whose evidence on this point is above suspicion. Samuel Curwen, a prominent Massachusetts Loyalist—who had been a high official in his native province, and now was an exile in England—made a tour in the Midland counties, and spent a week at Birmingham. Walking there on the Lichfield road, Curwen was invited indoors by a Quaker, and found him “a warm American, as most of the middle classes are through the Kingdom.” He passed an agreeable day with a merchant, who had been in America, and



who was "her steady and ardent advocate." He stepped into the shop of a gunmaker. The British Ministry—with foresight which, for the War Office, might almost be called inspiration—had given the man an order to construct six hundred rifles for the use of General Howe's army; and yet, said Curwen, "he is an anti-ministerialist, as is the whole town." If such was the case in a district where Government orders for military supplies had been freely placed, it may well be believed that political discontent and disgust were not less acute in those commercial centers which greatly suffered, and in no way profited, by the existence of hostilities.

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The Revolution was marked by a feature unique in English history. Not a few officers of every grade, who were for the most part distinguished by valor and ability, flatly refused to serve against the colonists; and their scruples were respected by their countrymen in general, and by the King and his ministers as well. An example was set in the highest quarters. The sailor and the soldier who stood first in the public esteem were Augustus Keppel, Vice Admiral of the White, and Lieutenant General Sir Jeffrey Amherst. Keppel made it known that he was ready as ever to serve against a European enemy, but that, although professional employment was the dearest object in his life, he would not accept it "in the line of America." After that announcement was made, and to some degree on account of it, he enjoyed a great and indeed an extravagant, popularity among all ranks of the

Navy; and when a European war broke out, he was promoted, and placed in command of the Channel Fleet. Amherst had absolutely declined to sail for New England in order to lead troops in the field. He withstood the expostulations and entreaties of his Sovereign, who in a personal interview, as Dr. Johnson truly testified, was as fine a gentleman as the world could see; and who never was more persuasive and impressive than when condescending to request one of his subjects to undertake a public duty as a private favor to himself. The circumstance was not remembered to Amherst's disadvantage. He was retained as Commander-in-Chief of the forces; within the ensuing five years he became a peer, the Colonel of a regiment of Household Cavalry, and a full General in the army; and he died a Field-Marshal.

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Some military and naval men left the service outright, and re-entered private life, with no diminution to such popularity, or social predominance, as they had hitherto enjoyed. Some remained on half-pay until Great Britain was attacked by European enemies, when they promptly and joyfully placed their swords once more at the disposal of the Government. Others, again, accepted a commission in the militia; a post of unusual danger and importance at a moment when England, stripped bare of regular troops, had temporarily lost command of the sea in consequence of the scandalous improvidence of the Board at the head of which Lord Sandwich sat. Whatever course they adopted, their fidelity to principle appeared reason-

able, and even laudable, to their countrymen of the middle and lower classes; and in their intercourse with equals they brought down upon themselves and their families no penalties whatsoever. The American war, from the outset to the finish, was an open question in English society. A general or colonel, who had refused to take a command against the colonists, lived comfortably and pleasantly with his country neighbors. The strong Tory politicians among them might grumble against him as fanciful or factious; but much harder things would have been said about him if he had shot foxes, or given a piece of ground for the site of a Nonconformist chapel.

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1. Conway said that a military man, before he drew his sword against his fellow-subjects, ought to ask himself whether the cause were just or no. Unless his mind was satisfied on that point, all emoluments—nay, the sacrifice of what people in his situation held dearest, their honor—would be nothing in the scale with his conscience. He, for his part, never could draw his sword in that cause.

2. Lady Chatham wrote: "Feeling all this, Sir, as Lord Chatham does, you will tell yourself with what concern he communicates to you a step that, from his fixed opinion with regard to the continuance of the unhappy war with our fellow-subjects of America, he has found it necessary to take. It is that of withdrawing his son from such a service."

3. Lord Effingham's highest ambition was to serve his country in a military capacity. "When the duties," he said, "of a soldier and a citizen become inconsistent, I shall always think myself obliged to sink the character of the soldier in that of the citizen, till such time as those duties shall again, by the malice of our real enemies, become united." Effingham sat down as soon as he had made this remarkable confession; but none of his brother peers, who were present, took exception to his speech; nor was he ever subsequently taunted with it in debate, although he was a frequent, a fiery, and a most provocative assailant of the Government. Outside Parliament, not in any way by his own seeking, he at once became celebrated, and vastly popular.

4. Lord Frederic Cavendish allowed it to be known that he would not apply for a command against the colonists. Lord Frederic, however, continued in his profession; and in subsequent years he was made a full General by the Whigs, and a Field-Marshal by the Tories.

5. Granville Sharp, a clerk in the Ordnance Department, wrote in his diary, July 24, 1775: "Account in Gazette of the Battle at Charlestown, near Boston, and letters with large demands for ordnance stores, being received, which were ordered to be got with all expedition, I thought it right to declare my objections to the being any way concerned in that unnatural business."

6. In February, 1776, Lord Howe was appointed to the American station; and he forthwith invited Cartwright to call at his house in Grafton Street, and

earnestly pressed him to embark on board the flag-ship. Cartwright, too deeply moved to argue with a patron whom he almost worshipped, intimated that he was unable to accept the offer, and placed in the Admiral's hands a letter which explained the reasons of his decision; and Lord Howe in reply acknowledged, mournfully enough, that opinions in politics, on points of such national moment as the differences subsisting between England and America, should be treated like opinions in religion, wherein everyone was at liberty to regulate his conduct by those ideas which he had adopted upon due reflection and enquiry. Cartwright continued to reside in his native county, respected and loved by young and old.

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It has happened again and again that, when a nation is engaged in serious hostilities, the partisans of peace have been exposed to humiliating, and sometimes very unmerciful, treatment from outbreaks of popular violence. But opponents of the American war had in this respect very little to complain about. . . . It must have been seldom indeed that any friend of America, in any city of England, was harshly or disrespectfully used by those among his neighbors who belonged to the war party. . . . That such methods [of openly defying the Court], without entailing any disagreeable consequences on those who employed them, should have been put in practice against a Ministry which was engaged in the conduct of an important war, is an indirect, but a most material, proof that the war itself was disliked by the nation. The direct



proof is stronger yet; for at many County meetings there was a resolution, at most banquets a whole string of flowery sentiments, and prominent in every petition and address an emphatic paragraph, all of which denoted friendliness towards America, and exhaled hearty aspirations for an immediate peace. . . .

Anti-war meetings always passed off quietly [i. e., without interruption] between 1776 and 1782. . . .

There exists one tenable theory, and one only, to account for the tranquillity and security amid which those, who opposed the Government on the question of America, were able to carry forward their political operations. The rational explanation is that the disfavor beneath which, from other causes, the Ministry had long and deservedly labored, instead of being diminished, was confirmed and aggravated by the war.

## II

### THE POWER OF GEORGE III

EXTRACTS FROM G. O. TREVELYAN'S GEORGE THE  
THIRD AND CHARLES FOX.

. . . But corruption, and servility, and perverted party spirit, were still<sup>1</sup> powerful enough to maintain the ministerial members at their usual figure; and the address was carried by two hundred and forty-three votes to eighty-six. Gibbon, who went with the majority, told Horace Walpole that, if it had not been for shame, there were hardly twenty men in the House who were not ready to vote for peace. "I did not," said Walpole, "think it very decent for so sensible a man to support the war, and make such a confession."

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The House was terribly excited. It was one of those sudden storms of passionate emotion when men of high character and dignity are betrayed into actions which they never afterwards love to remember. Burke taunted the Solicitor-General with having accepted a retainer as standing counsel for such a client as Lord George Germaine; and Wedderburn told Burke that he did not know how to behave himself, and must be taught

<sup>1</sup>In the autumn of 1777.

to mend his manners. Burke walked out of the House, making a sign for Wedderburn to follow; and their friends had some difficulty in averting a duel which might have resulted in a catastrophe almost too serious to contemplate.

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George the Third knew his House of Commons by heart, and he could read the signs of the political weather better than any of his Cabinet. He was too strong a man to underrate the abilities of those whom he disliked; he recognized the extraordinary powers of Charles Fox; and he was not blind to the growing influence of one in whom he had long seen an antagonist, and now began to foresee a rival. Moreover he set great store on Sandwich, who was a statesman exactly to his mind. Subservient in the Closet, masterful and overbearing in the Cabinet, and a fearless bully in debate, the First Lord of the Admiralty was always ready to accept the King's views on policy, to impose them upon his own colleagues, and to champion them against all comers in Parliament. Such a Minister was too precious to be thrown away or abandoned, however unseemly his private life, and however deplorably mismanaged might be the public department committed to his care. George the Third had been greatly alarmed when Fox so very nearly carried his first vote of censure on the third of March.<sup>1</sup> As soon as the master learned that a servant, whom he highly valued, had

only been saved from a crushing condemnation by a small margin of votes, he at once resolved upon sharp and uncompromising action. The division had taken place late at night; and the next morning, before most of those who bore a part in it had left their beds, King George was already expressing to Lord North by letter his indignation at the number of Ministerialists who had shamefully failed in their duty, and his determination to adopt any means, which he could personally take, in order to suppress such irregularities in the future. "The list of the House of Commons," he wrote, "has I trust been so accurately prepared that there will be no difficulty in knowing whose attention must be quickened. I trust Lord North will not let his usual good nature accept excuses upon this occasion. It is the good of my service, that calls forth severity." Severe enough, in all conscience, his Majesty showed himself. He left it to the Prime Minister to see that all defaulters in civil employment were "strongly spoke to"; and meanwhile he took into his own hands the officers of the Army, who abounded in the House of Commons, and who for the most part shared the feelings of the Navy with regard to Lord Sandwich. The King desired the Acting Commander-in-Chief of the Forces to call to account the colonels, captains, and subalterns; and he stated it as his decided opinion that generals, who held those governorships of fortresses which were the special prizes of the service, should lose them for opposing the wishes of the Crown. That trebling of the Government majority, which took place on the second vote of censure, affords a remark-

able indication of the multitude of place-men who then sat in Parliament, and a measure of the King's industry and dexterity in manipulating a division-list. His strength of will was seldom more effectually displayed than when, with public sentiment almost unanimously against him, he kept Lord Sandwich safe in office on the morrow of a flagrant personal scandal, and on the eve of a fresh naval war. England was condemned to encounter Spain, as well as France, in mortal combat, with that Old Man of the Sea triumphantly and irremovably mounted on her shoulders.

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The liberties of Britain had been in jeopardy from the moment when George the Third, in the full vigor of early manhood, and with a force of will, and determination of purpose, which almost reached the level of genius, set himself deliberately to build up a solid and enduring structure of personal government. To maintain in power ministers of his own choice, irrespective of the estimation in which they were held by their countrymen; to exercise his veto on legislation, not by announcing through the mouth of the Clerk of the Parliaments that the King would further consider the matter, but by contriving that the measures which he disapproved should be defeated in the Lobby of one or another of the two Houses; "to secure to the Court the unlimited and uncontrolled use of its vast influence, under the sole direction of its private favor"; those were the objects which he pursued, and attained, by methods opposed to the spirit, but compatible with



the processes, of the Constitution. The King had the wit to see "that the forms of a free, and the ends of an arbitrary, government," might be reconciled by a course of action which avoided the outward show of despotism. Before he had been ten years on the throne he was in a fair way to succeed where Charles the First and James the Second had failed; and his policy, while less fraught with peril to the safety of the monarch than was the policy of the Stuarts, was infinitely more demoralizing to the character of the nation. George the Third had no occasion to march his Guards to Westminster, or commit the leaders of the Opposition to the Tower of London, as long as he could make sure of a parliamentary majority by an unscrupulous abuse of Government patronage, and, where need was, by direct and downright bribery. "The power of the Crown," said Burke, "almost dead and rotten as Prerogative, has grown up anew, with much more strength, and far less odium, under the name of Influence." Everything, so this famous patriot declared, had been drawn from its holdings in the country to the personal favor of the prince. That favor was the sole introduction to office, and the sole tenure by which it was held; until at last servility had become prevalent, and almost universal, "in spite of the dead letter of any laws and institutions whatsoever."

The machinery of corruption was worked under the habitual and minute supervision of the King; and with good reason. In previous reigns the leaders of both parties—Harley and Bolingbroke, and Walpole and

Newcastle—had bribed to keep themselves in office; and now George the Third was bribing, on his own account, in order to retain in his own hands the secure possession of autocratic power. The unsavory revelations that appear on almost every page of the royal letters to Lord North enable us faintly to conjecture the character of those still less avowable secrets which did not bear to be recorded in black and white, and were reserved for a private conversation between the monarch and the minister. The official correspondence which the King most thoroughly enjoyed was that which he exchanged with Mr. John Robinson, the Patronage Secretary of the Treasury, who was proverbially known for as shrewd and shameless a trafficker in the human conscience as ever priced a rotten borough, or slipped a bank bill into the palm of a wavering senator. All the departments of electoral and parliamentary management were administered by this adroit and devoted servant beneath the close and constant inspection of the master's eye. When a general election was in prospect the King began to save up a special fund to meet the initial expenses of the contest. He knew the circumstances of all the landed proprietors who had a borough at their disposal—which of them could afford to keep back one of his two seats for a son or a nephew, and which of them was prepared to part with both; how many of them would be content to take their money in pounds and how many would stand out for guineas. He condescended even to those ignoble details which the least fastidious of parliamentary candidates leaves to the sinister indus-

try of a subordinate agent. "Lord North," he wrote, "acquainted me with his wish of supporting Mr. Powney for the borough of New Windsor. I shall get my tradesmen encouraged to appear for him. I shall order, in consequence of Mr. Robinson's hint, the houses I rent in Windsor to stand in the parish rate in different names of my servants, so that will create six votes."

When the King had got his nominees duly elected to Parliament he did not abandon them to their own devices, but took excellent care that they should perform his behests within the walls of Westminster. Before he sat down to his early breakfast on the morning after a critical division he already had looked to see whether any of their names were missing on the list of ministerial voters. Tellers of the Exchequer and Storekeepers of the Ordnance, and Vice-Treasurers of Ireland, and Paymasters of Marines, and Rangers of the Royal Forests, and Registrars of the Chancery of Barbadoes, and Grooms of the Bed-chamber, and holders of open pensions for life, and holders of secret pensions during pleasure, and Clerks of the Board of Green Cloth, and the eight Lords of Trade marching to order like the section of an infantry regiment, and the whole crowd of place-holders from the King's Turnspit, who hired a poor wretch at two shillings a week to perform his functions in the Royal Kitchen, up to the Envoy Extraordinary at the Court of Savoy, "who made a sinecure of his post, and left a secretary at Turin, while he enjoyed his friends and his bottle in London"—these remarkable senators, one and all, were perfectly aware that, while

they were free to neglect their official duties at Dublin, or Portsmouth, or in the West Indies, or on the Continent of Europe, they would have to be inside the House of Commons when the door was shut, and the question put, or their gracious sovereign would know the reason why. When there were not enough well-paid appointments to go round the whole circle of expectants those left out in the cold were conciliated by a round sum in hard cash. "Mr. Robinson," said his Majesty, "shewed his usual propriety in transmitting to me last night the list of speakers in the debate, as well as of the division. I take this opportunity of sending £6000 to be placed to the same account as that sent on the 21st of August." The means which the King employed were sanctified in his own mind by the ideal perfection of the object at which he was aiming. "It is attachment to my country," he wrote, "that alone actuates my purposes; and Lord North shall see that at least there is one person willing to preserve unspoiled the most beautiful combination that ever was." It was a combination which has presented itself under a very different aspect to honest and discerning Englishmen. "Of all ingenious instruments of despotism," said Sydney Smith, "I must commend a popular assembly where the majority are paid and hired, and a few bold and able men, by their brave speeches, make the people believe that they are free."

The enormous, and perpetually growing, cost of this flagitious system, was ostensibly provided by the King himself from the resources at his own command. George

the Third called the tune, because he paid, or was supposed to pay, for the music. A Civil List of three-quarters of a million pounds a year had been settled on him, once for all, at the commencement of his reign, and was exempt thenceforward from the control of Parliament. He enjoyed, on the same agreeable conditions, the receipts from the Duchies of Cornwall and Lancaster; whatever surplus he could draw from the Kingdom of Hanover, and the Bishopric of Osnaburgh; lucrative Admiralty dues, and Crown rights, and various odds and ends of taxation then regarded as perquisites of the monarch—as well as the hereditary revenues of Scotland, and the Civil List of Ireland, which was a veritable gold mine of pensions and salaries for obsequious English politicians who did as the King bade them at Westminster. The entire sum exceeded a million annually, at a time when the average expenditure of the country, in a year of peace, fell considerably short of five millions. The English Civil List was encumbered with the stipends of the Judges, and with the outfit and maintenance of British Ministers abroad, whether they were living at their posts in the capitals to which they were accredited, or whether they were tippling, and voting, with the Bedfords in London; but otherwise the whole of this colossal fund was at the absolute and unfettered disposal of the monarch.

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The fact was that most of the ready cash which ought by rights to have gone in paying the King's



butcher, and grocer, and coach-maker, had been consumed in buying Members of Parliament; in corrupting the daily Press; in subsidizing needy men of letters on a scale of remuneration much higher than their pens would have commanded in the open market; and in persecuting authors, publishers, printers, compositors, and printers' devils for their respective shares in the production of pamphlets and newspaper articles which displeased the Court. Those ruinously expensive operations had been in full swing ever since the date when the young King first made up his mind to assert the power of the Crown by putting Pitt out, and Bute in. George the Third speedily exhausted the hundred and seventy thousand pounds of savings left him by his wise old grandfather, who found it cheaper, as well as less troublesome, to govern through a Minister possessing the confidence of Parliament and the country; he emptied the Privy Purse; and he incurred in addition heavy obligations which he was totally unable to meet. In February 1769 Parliament was asked for a cool half million to defray the King's debts. The essential nature of the demand was analyzed and exposed by George Grenville and Barré in the one House and by Lord Chatham in the other. They openly affirmed—what every one of their hearers in his secret conscience knew to be true—that the money, which the British people had contributed in perfect good faith towards supporting their monarch in ease and dignity, was used to debauch the virtue of their own elected representatives, and to poison the wells of politics.



FROM W. E. H. LECKY'S A HISTORY OF ENGLAND IN THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

George III mixed very little in the world—scarcely at all with the young nobility. His mother said that their lax manners would probably corrupt her son. Her enemies declared that the real explanation of this strange seclusion was her own insatiable avarice of power, which made her wish beyond all things to establish a complete ascendancy over his mind, and to withdraw him from every influence that could rival her own. Like most members of German royal families, she exaggerated the prerogative of monarchy to the highest degree, and her favorite exhortation, “George, be a king!” is said to have left a deep impression on the mind of her son.

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The new Sovereign came to the throne amid an enthusiasm such as England had hardly seen since Charles II restored the monarchy. By the common consent of all parties the dynastic contest was regarded as closed, and after two generations of foreign and unsympathetic rulers, the nation, which has always been peculiarly intolerant of strangers, accepted with delight an English king. The favorable impression was still further confirmed when the more salient points of the private character of the King became generally understood. Simple, regular, and abstemious in all his tastes and habits, deeply religious without affectation of enthusiasm, a good son, a faithful husband, a kind master, and (except when he had met with gross ingratitude) an affectionate father, he ex-

hibited through his whole reign, and in a rare perfection, that type of decorous and domestic virtue which the English middle classes most highly prize. The proclamation against immorality with which he began his reign; the touching piety with which, at his coronation, he insisted on putting aside his crown when receiving the sacrament; his rebuke to a Court preacher who had praised him in a sermon; his suppression of Sunday levees; his discouragement of gambling at Court; his letter of remonstrance to an Archbishop of Canterbury who had allowed balls in his palace; his constant attendance and reverential manner at religious services; his solemn and pious resignation under great private misfortunes, contrasted admirably with the open immorality of his father, his grandfather, and his great-grandfather, and with the outrageous licentiousness of his own brothers and of his own sons. He never sought for popularity; but he had many of the kingly graces, and many of the national tastes that are most fitted to obtain it. He went through public ceremonies with much dignity, and although his manner in private was hurried and confused, it was kind and homely, and not without a certain unaffected grace. Unlike his two predecessors, he was emphatically a gentleman, and he possessed to a rare degree the royal art of enhancing small favors by a gracious manner and a few well-chosen words. His country tastes, his love of field sports, his keen interest in the great public schools, endeared him to large classes of his subjects; and, though he was neither brilliant nor witty, several of his terse and happy

sayings are still remembered. He was also a very brave man. In the Wilkes riots, in 1769, when his palace was attacked; in the Lord George Gordon riots, in 1780, when his presence of mind contributed largely to save London; in 1786, when a poor madwoman attempted to stab him at the entrance of St. James's Palace; in 1795, when he was assailed on his way to Parliament; in 1800, when he was fired at in a theater, he exhibited the most perfect composure amid danger. His habit in dating his letters, of marking, not only the day, but the hour and the minute in which he wrote, illustrates not unhappily the microscopic attention which he paid to every detail of public business, and which was the more admirable because his natural tendency was towards sloth. In matters that were not connected with his political prejudices, his sincere appreciation of piety, and his desire to do good, sometimes overcame his religious bigotry and his hatred of change. Thus he always spoke with respect of the Methodists, and especially of Lady Huntingdon; he supported Howard, and subscribed to a statue in his honor; he supported the Lancaster system of education, though Lancaster was a Dissenter, and was looked upon with disfavor by the bishops; he encouraged the movement for Sunday schools. He was sincerely desirous of doing his duty, and deeply attached to his country, although stronger feelings often interfered both with his conscientiousness and with his patriotism.

It is not surprising that a sovereign of whom all this may be truly said should have obtained much respect

and admiration; and it must be added that, in his hatred of innovation and in his vehement anti-American, anti-Catholic, and anti-Gallican feelings, he represented the sentiments of large sections—perhaps of the majority—of his people. The party which he drew from its depression has naturally revered his memory, and old age, and blindness, and deafness, and deprivation of reason, and the base ingratitude of two sons, have cast a deep pathos over his closing years.

All these things have contributed very naturally to throw a delusive veil over the political errors of a sovereign of whom it may be said, without exaggeration, that he inflicted more profound and enduring injuries upon his country than any other modern English king, Ignorant, narrow-minded, and arbitrary, with an unbounded confidence in his own judgment and an extravagant estimate of his prerogative, resolved at all hazards to compel his ministers to adopt his own views, or to undermine them if they refused, he spent a long life in obstinately resisting measures which are now almost universally admitted to have been good, and in supporting measures which are as universally admitted to have been bad. He espoused with passionate eagerness the American quarrel; resisted obstinately the measures of conciliation by which at one time it might easily have been stifled; envenomed it by his glaring partisanship, and protracted it for several years, in opposition to the wish and to the advice even of his own favorite and responsible minister. He took the warmest personal interest in the attempts that were made, in the matter of general warrants, to men-

ace the liberty of the subject, and in the case of the Middlesex election to abridge the electoral rights of constituencies, and in the other paltry, violent, and arbitrary measures by which the country was inflamed and Wilkes was converted into a hero. The last instance of an English officer deprived of his regiment for his vote in Parliament was due to the personal intervention of the King; and the ministers whom he most warmly favored were guilty of an amount and audacity of corruption which is probably unequalled in the parliamentary history of England. All the measures that were carried or attempted with the object of purifying the representative body—the publication of debates, the alteration of the mode of trying contested elections, the reduction of sinecures and pensions, the enlargement of the constituencies—were contrary to the wishes of the King. Although his income during the greater part of his reign was little less than a million a year, although his Court was parsimonious to a fault, and his hospitality exceedingly restricted, and although he succeeded to a considerable sum that had been saved by his predecessor, he accumulated in the course of his reign debts to the amount of no less than £3,398,061; and there can be little doubt that contemporary public opinion was right in attributing a great part of these debts to corrupt expenditure in Parliament or at elections. Of all the portions of the Empire none was so impoverished, distracted, and misgoverned as Ireland, but every attempt to improve its condition found in the King a bitter adversary. He opposed the relaxation of the laws by



which Irish commerce had been crushed, although his own Tory ministers were in favor of it. He opposed Catholic emancipation with a persistent bitterness, although that measure alone could have made the Irish union acceptable to the people, and although his minister had virtually pledged himself to grant it, and by his refusal he consigned the country to a prolonged and disastrous agitation, the effects of which may never disappear. He opposed the endowment of the Catholic clergy, although statesmen of the most various schools concurred in the belief that no other measure would act so beneficially on the social condition of Ireland, or would so effectually tranquilize the minds of people.

He refused to consent to throw open the higher ranks in the army to the Catholics, although that measure had already been conceded to the army in Ireland by the Irish Parliament and he flung the country into all the agonies of a "No Popery" dissolution at the very time when a fearful struggle with France was demanding the utmost unanimity, and when thousands of Catholic soldiers were fighting bravely in his cause. In the same spirit he supported the slave trade; he described the Test and Corporation Acts as the palladium of the Constitution, and was inexorably opposed to their abolition, and he created Tory peers in such lavish numbers, and with such an exclusive view to their political subserviency, that he seriously lowered the character and fundamentally altered the tendencies of the House of Lords. In a word, there is scarcely a field of politics in which the hand of the King may not be traced—sometimes in postponing inevitable



measures of justice and reform, sometimes in sowing the seeds of enduring evil.

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The relations of the Crown to the ministry were to be changed. For a considerable time the Treasury, the ecclesiastical patronage, the Cornish boroughs, and all the other sources of influence which belonged nominally to the Crown, had been, with few exceptions, at the disposal of the minister, and were employed to strengthen his administration. They were now to be in a great degree withdrawn from his influence, and to be employed in maintaining in Parliament a body of men whose political attachment centered in the King alone, who looked to him alone for promotion, who, though often holding places in the Government, were expected rather to control than to support it, and, if it diverged from the policy which was personally acceptable to the King, to conspire against it and overthrow it. A Crown influence was thus to be established in Parliament as well as a ministerial influence, and it was hoped that it would turn the balance of parties and accelerate the downfall of any administration which was not favored by the King.

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Lord Henley, a coarse, drunken, and unprincipled lawyer, became one of the most docile and useful agents of the policy of the King. The enterprise of giving Bute high political office was found somewhat difficult, but a characteristic method was adopted. Lord Holderness, who, though a man of very insig-

nificant abilities, was a Secretary of State, agreed with Bute, as early as November, 1760, to quarrel with his colleagues, and throw up his office in seeming anger. The resignation was for a time deferred; but it was accomplished in March 1761. Lord Holderness obtained a pension of £4,000 a year for life, and a reversion of the Cinque Ports, and his place was filled by the favorite. Nearly at the same time, Legge, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had some time before quarreled with Bute about a Hampshire election, was dismissed with circumstances of great discourtesy, and his place was filled by Lord Barrington—an honest man, but one who adopted and avowed the principle that it was his duty always, except in case of the gravest possible causes of difference, to support the ministers selected by the King, whatever party or connection they belonged to, and whatever might be his opinion of the men and of their measures. He was thus completely identified with the King's friends, and by the wish of the King was kept in office through several successive administrations. The brilliant but versatile and unprincipled Charles Townshend filled his place, and a few other changes were made which, though unimportant in themselves, showed that Tory tendencies, and especially personal devotion to the Sovereign, had become the passports of favor. Notwithstanding the professions of purity that were made by the King's friends, it was noticed that the general election which now took place was one of the most corrupt ever known in England, that large sums were issued by the Treasury, that the King took an active

part in naming the candidates, and that boroughs attached to the Duchy of Cornwall, which had hitherto been at the disposal of the ministry, were now treated as solely at the disposal of the Crown.

It was evident that it was intended, in the first place, to strike down Pitt; and an opportunity soon occurred.

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So far the policy of the secret counsellors of the young King had been brilliantly successful. In less than twelve months, and in the midst of the war, the greatest war minister England had ever produced was overthrown, and the party with which the King personally sympathized had become the most powerful in the State.

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Newcastle, in the first exultation that followed the resignation of Pitt, had anticipated a renewal of his ascendancy, but he soon learned how greatly he had miscalculated. Although First Lord of the Treasury, he found that he was powerless in the Government. Even his own subordinates at the Treasury Bench are said to have been instructed to slight him. The most important political steps were taken without consulting him. Cabinet councils were summoned without any notice of the subject for discussion being given him. The King made no less than seven peers without even informing Newcastle of his intention. Neither his age, his rank, his position in the ministry, nor his eminent services to the dynasty, could save him from marked coldness on the part of the King, from con-

temptuous discourtesy and studied insults on the part of the favorite. The situation soon became intolerable, and when Bute announced his intention of withdrawing the subsidy which England paid to the King of Prussia, Newcastle refused to consent. In May, 1762, the old statesman resigned, refusing with some dignity a pension that was offered him for the purpose of recruiting a fortune which had been wrecked in the public service. Bute then became in name, what since the resignation of Pitt he had been in reality, the head of the ministry, and Grenville became Secretary of State in his stead.

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[The Fox referred to in the following passage was Henry Fox, the father of Charles James Fox.]

Then came a period of intimidation and corruption compared with which the worst days of the Walpole administration appeared pure. Bribes ranging from £200 and upwards were given almost publicly at the pay office. Martin, the Secretary of the Treasury, afterwards acknowledged that no less than £25,000 were expended in a single morning in purchasing votes. Larger sums are said to have been given to corporations to petition for the peace. Urgent letters were written to the lords lieutenant of the counties calling on them to procure addresses with the same object. From the very beginning of the ascendancy of Bute, patronage had been enlarged, and employed with extravagant profusion for the purpose of increasing the political power of the Crown, and this process

was rapidly extended. Bute did not venture, like Harley, to create simultaneously twelve peers, but sixteen were made in the space of two years. The number of Lords of the Bedchamber was increased from twelve to twenty-two, each with a salary of £500 a year, and they were selected exclusively from among the members of Parliament. It was found necessary to raise £3,500,000, and this was done partly by two lotteries, and partly by a loan which was not thrown open to public competition, and which was issued on terms so shamefully improvident that the shares at once rose ten per cent. A large proportion of these shares were distributed among the friends of the Government, and thus a new and most wasteful form of bribery was introduced into English politics.

Intimidation of the grossest kind was at the same time practiced. All the partisans of Newcastle were at once driven from office, and some of the most prominent men in the country were treated with an arrogance that recalled the worst days of the Stuarts. The Duke of Devonshire was expelled from the office of Chamberlain with circumstances of the grossest insult. The King refused even to see him on the occasion, and with his own hand struck his name from the list of Privy Councillors. The Dukes of Newcastle and Grafton and the Marquis of Rockingham were deprived of the lord-lieutenancies of their counties. It has always been one of the most healthy features of English political life that the public offices are filled with permanent officials, who are unaffected by party fluctuations, who instruct alike Whig and Tory min-



isters, preserve unbroken the steady tendencies of government, and from the stability of their position acquire a knowledge of administrative details and an independence and impartiality of judgment which could never be reasonably expected from men whose tenure of office was dependent on the ascendancy of a party. This system Fox and Bute resolved to break down. They determined that every servant of the Government, even to the very lowest, should be of their own nomination. A persecution as foolish as it was harsh was directed by Fox against the humblest officials who had been appointed or recommended by Whig statesmen, or were in any way connected with them. Clerks, tidewaiters, and excisemen were included in the proscription. The widow of an admiral who was distantly connected with the Duke of Devonshire, a poor man who had been rewarded for bravery against smugglers at the recommendation of the Duke of Grafton, a schoolboy who was a nephew of Legge, were among those who were deprived of places, pensions, or reversions. There was even a design of depriving the members of the Opposition of the great patent places they held, although the terms of the patents distinctly asserted that the places were for life. Fox wished to submit to the twelve judges the question whether it was not in the power of the King to annul the patents; but the Chancellor, Lord Northington, declared that it would be as reasonable to ask them to pronounce upon the validity of the Great Charter. It was the aim of the Court party to crush to the very dust, the great Whig connection, by show-

ing that no person, however humble, who had received favors from it could escape the vengeance of the Crown, while every resource of patronage and place was employed for the purpose of consolidating the new interest. One official, who for seven years had been of the King's bedchamber, was turned out solely because he had no seat in Parliament, and could therefore be of no use there.

### III

## SELECTIONS FROM BURKE

### SPEECH ON AMERICAN TAXATION

On April 19, 1774, "the worthy member" to whom Burke refers in paragraph 5 of the Conciliation—Ross Fuller—moved to repeal the tax on tea. One of the numerous "King's men" who spoke against the motion was Charles W. Cornwall, who had only recently entered the service of George III, and who apparently spoke with pompous and hypocritical zeal, for Burke says: "The honorable gentleman has desired some of us to lay our hands upon our hearts, and answer to his queries." Burke replied in a speech nearly as long as the Conciliation:

SIR: I agree with the honorable gentleman who spoke last, that this subject is not new in this House. Very disagreeably to this House, very unfortunately to this nation, and to the peace and prosperity of this whole empire, no topic has been more familiar to us. For nine long years, session after session, we have been lashed round and round this miserable circle of occasional arguments and temporary expedients. I am sure our heads must turn, and our stomachs nauseate with them. We have had them in every shape; we have looked at them in every point of view.

Invention is exhausted; reason is fatigued; experience has given judgment; but obstinacy is not yet conquered.

The honorable gentleman has made one endeavor more to diversify the form of this disgusting argument. He has thrown out a speech composed almost entirely of challenges. Challenges are serious things; and as he is a man of prudence as well as resolution, I dare say he has very well weighed those challenges before he delivered them. I had long the happiness to sit at the same side of the House, and to agree with the honorable gentleman on all the American questions. My sentiments, I am sure, are well known to him; and I thought I had been perfectly acquainted with his. Though I find myself mistaken, he will still permit me to use the privilege of an old friendship; he will permit me to apply myself to the House under the sanction of his authority; and, on the various grounds he has measured out, to submit to you the poor opinions which I have formed upon a matter of importance enough to demand the fullest consideration I could bestow upon it.

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But will you repeal the act, says the honorable gentleman, at this instant when America is in open resistance to your authority, and that you have just revived your system of taxation? He thinks he has driven us into a corner. But thus pent up, I am content to meet him; because I enter the lists supported by my old authority, his new friends, the ministers themselves. The honorable gentleman remembers

that about five years ago as great disturbances as the present prevailed in America on account of the new taxes. The ministers represented these disturbances as treasonable; and this House thought proper, on that representation, to make a famous address for a revival and for a new application of a statute of Henry VIII. We besought the king, in that well-considered address, to inquire into treasons, and to bring the supposed traitors from America to Great Britain for trial. His Majesty was pleased graciously to promise a compliance with our request. All the attempts from this side of the House to resist these violences, and to bring about a repeal, were treated with the utmost scorn. An apprehension of the very consequences now stated by the honorable gentleman, was then given as a reason for shutting the door against all hope of such an alteration. And so strong was the spirit for supporting the new taxes, that the session concluded with the following remarkable declaration. After stating the vigorous measures which had been pursued, the speech from the throne proceeds:

“You have assured me of your *firm* support in the *prosecution* of them. Nothing, in my opinion, could be more likely to enable the well-disposed among my subjects in that part of the world effectually to discourage and defeat the designs of the factious and seditious than the hearty concurrence of every branch of the legislature in *maintaining the execution of the laws in every part of my dominions*”.

After this no man dreamt that a repeal under this ministry could possibly take place. The honorable



gentleman knows as well as I that the idea was utterly exploded by those who sway the House. This speech was made on the ninth day of May, 1769. Five days after this speech—that is, on the 13th of the same month—the public circular letter, a part of which I am going to read to you, was written by Lord Hillsborough, secretary of state for the colonies. After reciting the substance of the king's speech, he goes on thus:

“I can take upon me to assure you, notwithstanding insinuations to the contrary, from men with *factious and seditious views*, that his Majesty's *present administration have at no time entertained a design to propose to Parliament to lay any further taxes upon America for the purpose of RAISING A REVENUE*; and that it is at present their intention to propose, the next session of Parliament, to take off the duties upon glass, paper, and colors, upon consideration of such duties *having been laid contrary to the true principles of commerce*.

“These have *always* been, and *still are*, the sentiments of his Majesty's *present servants*; and by which their conduct in *respect to America has been governed*. And his Majesty relies upon your prudence and fidelity for such an explanation of his measures as may tend to remove the prejudices which have been excited by the misrepresentations of those who are enemies to the peace and prosperity of Great Britain and her colonies; and to re-establish that *mutual confidence and affection* upon which the glory and safety of the British empire depend.”

Here, Sir, is a canonical book of ministerial scripture, the general epistle to the Americans. What does the gentleman say to it? Here a repeal is promised; promised without condition; and while your authority was actually resisted. I pass by the public promise of a peer relative to the repeal of taxes by this House. I pass by the use of the king's name in a matter of supply, that sacred and reserved right of the Commons. I conceal the ridiculous figure of Parliament, hurling its thunders at the gigantic rebellion of America; and then five days after prostrate at the feet of those assemblies we affected to despise; begging them, by the intervention of our ministerial sureties, to receive our submission, and heartily promising amendment. These might have been serious matters formerly; but we are grown wiser than our fathers. Passing, therefore, from the constitutional consideration to the mere policy, does not this letter imply that the idea of taxing America for the purpose of revenue is an abominable project; when the ministry suppose that none but *factionous* men, and with seditious views, could charge them with it? does not this letter adopt and sanctify the American distinction of *taxing for a revenue*? does it not formally reject all future taxation on that principle? does it not state the ministerial rejection of such principle of taxation, not as the occasional, but the constant, opinion of the king's servants? does it not say (I care not how consistently), but does it not say, that their conduct with regard to America has been *always* governed by this policy? It goes a great deal further. These excellent and trusty servants of

the king, justly fearful lest they themselves should have lost all credit with the world, bring out the image of their gracious sovereign from the inmost and most sacred shrine, and they pawn him as a security for their promises.—“*His Majesty* relies on your prudence and fidelity for such an explanation of *his* measures.” These sentiments of the minister, and these measures of his Majesty, can only relate to the principle and practice of taxing for a revenue; and accordingly Lord Botetourt, stating it as such, did, with great propriety, and in the exact spirit of his instructions, endeavor to remove the fears of the Virginian assembly, lest the sentiments, which it seems (unknown to the world) had *always* been those of the ministers, and by which *their* conduct in *respect to America had been governed*, should by some possible revolution, favorable to wicked American taxes, be hereafter counteracted. He addresses them in this manner:

“It may possibly be objected, that, as his Majesty’s present administration are *not immortal*, their successors may be inclined to attempt to undo what the present ministers shall have attempted to perform; and to that objection I can give but this answer; that it is my firm opinion that the plan I have stated to you will certainly take place; and that it will never be departed from; and so determined am I for ever to abide by it that I will be content to be declared infamous if I do not, to the last hour of my life, at all times, in all places, and upon all occasions, exert every power with which I either am or ever shall be legally invested, in order to obtain and *maintain* for the con-

continent of America that *satisfaction* which I have been authorized to promise this day, by the *confidential* servants of our gracious sovereign, who to my certain knowledge rates his honor so high, *that he would rather part with his crown, than preserve it by deceit*'".

A glorious and true character! which (since we suffer his ministers with impunity to answer for his ideas of taxation) we ought to make it our business to enable his Majesty to preserve in all its luster. Let him have character, since ours is no more! Let some part of government be kept in respect!

This epistle was not the letter of Lord Hillsborough solely; though he held the official pen. It was the letter of the noble lord upon the floor,<sup>1</sup> and of all the king's then ministers, who (with I think the exception of two only) are his ministers at this hour. The very first news that a British parliament heard of what it was to do with the duties which it had given and granted to the king, was by the publication of the votes of American assemblies. It was in America that your resolutions were pre-declared. It was from thence that we knew to certainty how much exactly, and not a scruple more or less, we were to repeal. We were unworthy to be let into the secret of our own conduct. The assemblies had *confidential* communications from his Majesty's *confidential* servants. We were nothing but instruments. Do you, after this, wonder that you have no weight and no respect in the colonies? After this are you surprised, that Parliament is every day and everywhere losing (I feel it with sorrow, I utter it

1. Lord North.

with reluctance) that reverential affection, which so endearing a name of authority ought ever to carry with it; that you are obeyed solely from respect to the bayonet; and that this House, the ground and pillar of freedom, is itself held up only by the treacherous under-pinning and clumsy buttresses of arbitrary power?

If this dignity, which is to stand in the place of just policy and common sense, had been consulted, there was a time for preserving it, and for reconciling it with any concession. If in the session of 1768, that session of idle terror and empty menaces, you had, as you were often pressed to do, repealed these taxes; then your strong operations would have come justified and enforced, in case your concessions had been returned by outrages. But, preposterously, you began with violence; and before terrors could have any effect, either good or bad, your ministers immediately begged pardon, and promised that repeal to the obstinate Americans, which they had refused in an easy, good-natured, complying British parliament. The assemblies, which had been publicly and avowedly dissolved for *their* contumacy, are called together to receive *your* submission. Your ministerial directors blustered like tragic tyrants here; and then went mumping with a sore leg in America, canting and whining, and complaining of faction, which represented them as friends to a revenue from the colonies. I hope nobody in this House will hereafter have the impudence to defend American taxes in the name of ministry. The moment they do, with this letter of attorney in my hand I will



tell them, in the authorized terms, they are wretches, "with factious and seditious views; enemies to the peace and prosperity of the mother country and the colonies," and subverters "of the mutual affection and confidence on which the glory and safety of the British empire depend."

After this letter the question is no more on propriety or dignity. They are gone already. The faith of your sovereign is pledged for the political principle. The general declaration in the letter goes to the whole of it. You must therefore either abandon the scheme of taxing; or you must send the ministers tarred and feathered to America, who dared to hold out the royal faith for a renunciation of all taxes for revenue. Them you must punish, or this faith you must preserve. The preservation of this faith is of more consequence than the duties on *red lead* or *white lead*, or on broken *glass*, or *atlas-ordinary*, or *demy-fine*, or *blue royal*, or *bastard*, or *fool's-cap*, which you have given up; or the three-pence on tea which you retained. The letter went stamped with the public authority of this kingdom. The instructions for the colony government go under no other sanction; and America cannot believe, and will not obey you, if you do not preserve this channel of communication sacred. You are now punishing the colonies for acting on distinctions, held out by that very ministry which is here shining in riches, in favor, and in power; and urging the punishment of the very offence to which they had themselves been the tempters.

Sir, if reasons respecting simply your own commerce, which is your own convenience, were the sole

ground of the repeal of the five duties, why does Lord Hillsborough, in disclaiming in the name of the king and ministry their ever having had an intent to tax for revenue, mention it as the means "of re-establishing the confidence and affection of the colonies"? Is it a way of soothing *others* to assure them that you will take good care of *yourself*? The medium, the only medium, for regaining their affection and confidence is that you will take off something oppressive to their minds. Sir, the letter strongly enforces that idea; for though the repeal of the taxes is promised on commercial principles, yet the means of counteracting "the insinuations of men with factious and seditious views" is by a disclaimer of the intention of taxing for revenue, as a constant, invariable sentiment and rule of conduct in the government of America.

I remember that the noble lord on the floor, not in a former debate to be sure (it would be disorderly to refer to it; I suppose I read it somewhere), but the noble lord was pleased to say that he did not conceive how it could enter into the head of man to impose such taxes as those of 1767—I mean those taxes which he voted for imposing, and voted for repealing—as being taxes contrary to all the principles of commerce, laid on *British manufactures*.

I dare say the noble lord is perfectly well read—because the duty of his particular office requires he should be so—in all our revenue laws and in the policy which is to be collected out of them. Now, Sir, when he had read this act of American revenue, and a little recovered from his astonishment, I suppose

he made one step retrograde (it is but one) and looked at the act which stands just before in the statute-book. The American revenue act is the forty-fifth chapter; the other to which I refer is the forty-fourth of the same session. These two acts are both to the same purpose, both revenue acts, both taxing out of the kingdom, and both taxing British manufactures exported. As the forty-fifth is an act for raising a revenue in America, the forty-fourth is an act for raising a revenue in the Isle of Man. The two acts perfectly agree in all respects, except one. In the act for taxing the Isle of Man, the noble lord will find (not, as in the American act, four or five articles), but almost the *whole body* of British manufactures taxed from two and a half to fifteen per cent, and some articles, such as that of spirits, a great deal higher. You did not think it uncommercial to tax the whole mass of your manufactures, and, let me add, your agriculture too; for, I now recollect, British corn is there also taxed up to ten per cent, and this too in the very headquarters, the very citadel of smuggling, the Isle of Man. Now will the noble lord condescend to tell me why he repealed the taxes on your manufactures sent out to America, and not the taxes on the manufactures exported to the Isle of Man? The principle was exactly the same, the objects charged infinitely more extensive, the duties, without comparison, higher. Why? Why, notwithstanding all his childish pretexts, because the taxes were quietly submitted to in the Isle of Man; and because they raised a flame in America. Your reasons were political, not commercial. The repeal

was made, as Lord Hillsborough's letter well expresses it, to regain "the confidence and affection of the colonies, on which the glory and safety of the British empire depend." A wise and just motive surely, if ever there was such. But the mischief and dishonor is that you have not done what you had given the colonies just cause to expect, when your ministers disclaimed the idea of taxes for a revenue. There is nothing simple, nothing manly, nothing ingenuous, open, decisive, or steady, in the proceeding, with regard either to the continuance or the repeal of the taxes. The whole has an air of littleness and fraud. The article of tea is slurred over in the circular letter, as it were by accident—nothing is said of a resolution either to keep that tax or to give it up. There is no fair dealing in any part of the transaction.

If you mean to follow your true motive and your public faith, give up your tax on tea for raising a revenue, the principle of which has, in effect, been disclaimed in your name, and which produces you no advantage—no, not a penny. Or, if you choose to go on with a poor pretence instead of a solid reason, and will still adhere to your cant of commerce, you have ten thousand times more strong commercial reasons for giving up this duty on tea than for abandoning the five others that you have already renounced.

The American consumption of teas is annually, I believe, worth £300,000 at the least farthing. If you urge the American violence as a justification of your perseverance in enforcing this tax, you know that you can never answer this plain question: Why did you

repeal the others given in the same act, whilst the very same violence subsisted? But you did not find the violence cease upon that concession. No! because the concession was far short of satisfying the principle which Lord Hillsborough had abjured; or even the pretence on which the repeal of the other taxes was announced; and because, by enabling the East India Company to open a shop for defeating the American resolution not to pay that specific tax, you manifestly showed a hankering after the principle of the act which you formerly had renounced. Whatever road you take leads to a compliance with this motion. It opens to you at the end of every vista. Your commerce, your policy, your promises, your reasons, your pretences, your consistency, your inconsistency—all jointly oblige you to this repeal.

But still it sticks in our throats, "If we go so far, the Americans will go farther." We do not know that. We ought, from experience, rather to presume the contrary. Do we not know for certain that the Americans are going on as fast as possible whilst we refuse to gratify them? Can they do more, or can they do worse, if we yield this point? I think this concession will rather fix a turnpike to prevent their further progress. It is impossible to answer for bodies of men. But I am sure the natural effect of fidelity, clemency, kindness in governors is peace, good-will, order, and esteem on the part of the governed. I would certainly, at least, give these fair principles a fair trial, which, since the making of this act to this hour, they never have had.



[The following passage refers to the repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766.]

Sir, a partial repeal, or, as the *bon ton* of the court then was, a *modification*, would have satisfied a timid, unsystematic, procrastinating ministry, as such a measure has since done such a ministry. A modification is the constant resource of weak, undeciding minds. To repeal by the denial of our right to tax in the preamble (and this too did not want advisers) would have cut, in the heroic style, the Gordian knot with a sword. Either measure would have cost no more than a day's debate. But when the total repeal was adopted—and adopted on principles of policy, of equity, and of commerce—this plan made it necessary to enter into many and difficult measures.

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I think the inquiry lasted in the committee for six weeks; and, at its conclusion, this House, by an independent, noble, spirited, and unexpected majority, by a majority that will redeem all the acts ever done by majorities in Parliament, in the teeth of all the old mercenary Swiss of state, in despite of all the speculators and augurs of political events, in defiance of the whole embattled legion of veteran pensioners and practiced instruments of a court, gave a total repeal to the stamp act, and (if it had been so permitted) a lasting peace to this whole empire.

I state, Sir, these particulars, because this act of spirit and fortitude has lately been, in the circulation of the season, and in some hazarded declamations in

this House, attributed to timidity. If, Sir, the conduct of ministry, in proposing the repeal, had arisen from timidity with regard to themselves, it would have been greatly to be condemned. Interested timidity disgraces as much in the cabinet as personal timidity does in the field. But timidity, with regard to the well-being of our country, is heroic virtue. The noble lord<sup>1</sup> who then conducted affairs, and his worthy colleagues, whilst they trembled at the prospect of such distresses as you have since brought upon yourselves, were not afraid steadily to look in the face that glaring and dazzling influence at which the eyes of eagles have blanched. He looked in the face one of the ablest, and, let me say, not the most scrupulous, oppositions that perhaps ever was in this House; and withstood it, unaided by even one of the usual supports of administration. He did this when he repealed the stamp act. He looked in the face of a person he had long respected and regarded, and whose aid was then particularly wanting; I mean Lord Chatham. He did this when he passed the declaratory act.

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Everything, upon every side, was full of traps and mines. Earth below shook; heaven above menaced; all the elements of ministerial safety were dissolved. It was in the midst of this chaos of plots and counterplots; it was in the midst of this complicated warfare against public opposition and private treachery, that the firmness of that noble person was put to the proof.

<sup>1</sup> Rockingham.

He never stirred from his ground—no, not an inch. He remained fixed and determined, in principle, in measure, and in conduct. He practiced no managements. He secured no retreat. He sought no apology.

I will likewise do justice—I ought to do it—to the honorable gentleman who led us in this House. Far from the duplicity wickedly charged on him, he acted his part with alacrity and resolution. We all felt inspired by the example he gave us, down even to myself, the weakest in that phalanx. I declare, for one, I knew well enough (it could not be concealed from anybody) the true state of things; but in my life I never came with so much spirits into this House. It was a time for a *man* to act in. We had powerful enemies, but we had faithful and determined friends and a glorious cause. We had a great battle to fight, but we had the means of fighting—not as now, when our arms are tied behind us. We did fight that day, and conquer.

I remember, Sir, with a melancholy pleasure, the situation of the honorable gentleman who made the motion for the repeal; in that crisis, when the whole trading interest of this empire, crammed into your lobbies, with a trembling and anxious expectation, waited, almost to a winter's return of light, their fate from your resolutions. When, at length, you had determined in their favor, and your doors, thrown open, showed them the figure of their deliverer in the well-earned triumph of his important victory, from the whole of that grave multitude there arose an invol-

untary burst of gratitude and transport. They jumped upon him like children on a long absent father. They clung about him as captives about their redeemer. All England, all America, joined to his applause. Nor did he seem insensible to the best of all earthly rewards, the love and admiration of his fellow-citizens. *Hope elevated and joy brightened his crest.* I stood near him; and his face, to use the expression of the Scripture of the first martyr, "his face was as if it had been the face of an angel." I do not know how others feel; but if I had stood in that situation, I never would have exchanged it for all that kings in their profusion could bestow. I did hope that that day's danger and honor would have been a bond to hold us all together forever. But, alas! that, with other pleasing visions, is long since vanished.

Sir, this act of supreme magnanimity has been represented as if it had been a measure of an administration, that having no scheme of their own, took a middle line, pilfered a bit from one side and a bit from the other. Sir, they took *no* middle lines. They differed fundamentally from the schemes of both parties; but they preserved the objects of both. They preserved the authority of Great Britain. They preserved the equity of Great Britain. They made the declaratory act; they repealed the stamp act. They did both *fully*; because the declaratory act was *without qualification*; and the repeal of the stamp act *total*. This they did in the situation I have described.

Now, Sir, what will the adversary say to both these acts? If the principle of the declaratory act was not

good, the principle we are contending for this day is monstrous. If the principle of the repeal was not good, why are we not at war for a real, substantial, effective revenue? If both were bad, why has this ministry incurred all the inconveniences of both and of all schemes? Why have they enacted, repealed, enforced, yielded, and now attempt to enforce again?

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Sir, the agents and distributors of falsehoods have, with their usual industry, circulated another lie of the same nature with the former. It is this, that the disturbances arose from the account which had been received in America of the change in the ministry. No longer awed, it seems, with the spirit of the former rulers, they thought themselves a match for what our calumniators chose to qualify by the name of so feeble a ministry as succeeded. Feeble in one sense these men certainly may be called; for, with all their efforts—and they have made many—they have not been able to resist the distempered vigor, and insane alacrity, with which you are rushing to your ruin. But it does so happen that the falsity of this circulation is, like the rest, demonstrated by indisputable dates and records.

So little was the change known in America that the letters of your governors, giving an account of these disturbances long after they had arrived at their highest pitch, were all directed to the *old ministry*, and particularly to the *Earl of Halifax*, the secretary of state corresponding with the colonies, without once



in the smallest degree intimating the slightest suspicion of any ministerial revolution whatsoever. The ministry was not changed in England until the 10th day of July, 1765. On the 14th of the preceding June, Governor Fauquier from Virginia writes thus, and writes thus to the Earl of Halifax: "Government is set at *defiance*, not having strength enough in her hands to enforce obedience to the laws of the community. The private distress which every man feels, increases the *general dissatisfaction*, at the duties laid by the *stamp act*, which breaks out and shows itself upon every trifling occasion." The general dissatisfaction had produced some time before—that is, on the 29th of May—several strong public resolves against the stamp act; and those resolves are assigned by Governor Bernard as the cause of the *insurrections* in Massachusetts Bay, in his letter of the 15th of August, still addressed to the Earl of Halifax; and he continued to address such accounts to that minister quite to the 7th of September of the same year. Similar accounts, and of as late a date, were sent from other governors, and all directed to Lord Halifax. Not one of these letters indicates the slightest idea of a change, either known, or even apprehended.

Thus are blown away the insect race of courtly falsehoods! thus perish the miserable inventions of the wretched runners for a wretched cause, which they have fly-blown into every weak and rotten part of the country, in vain hopes that when their maggots had taken wing, their importunate buzzing might sound something like the public voice!

Sir, I have troubled you sufficiently with the state of America before the repeal. Now I turn to the honorable gentleman who so stoutly challenges us to tell, whether, after the repeal, the provinces were quiet? This is coming home to the point. Here I meet him directly; and answer most readily, *They were quiet*. And I, in my turn, challenge him to prove when, and where, and by whom, and in what numbers, and with what violence, the other laws of trade, as gentlemen assert, were violated in consequence of your concession? or that even your other revenue laws were attacked? But I quit the vantage-ground on which I stand, and where I might leave the burthen of the proof upon him; I walk down upon the open plain, and undertake to show that they were not only quiet, but showed many unequivocal marks of acknowledgment and gratitude. And to give him every advantage, I select the obnoxious colony of Massachusetts Bay, which at this time (but without hearing her) is so heavily a culprit before Parliament—I will select their proceedings even under circumstances of no small irritation. For, a little imprudently, I must say, Governor Bernard mixed in the administration of the lenitive of the repeal no small acrimony arising from matters of a separate nature. Yet see, Sir, the effect of that lenitive, though mixed with these bitter ingredients; and how this rugged people can express themselves on a measure of concession.

“If it is not in our power” (say they in their address to Governor Bernard) “in so full a manner as will be expected to show our respectful gratitude to

the mother country, or to make a dutiful and affectionate return to the indulgence of the king and Parliament, it shall be no fault of ours; for this we intend, and hope we shall be able fully to effect.”

Would to God that this temper had been cultivated, managed, and set in action! Other effects than those which we have since felt would have resulted from it.

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Let us, Sir, embrace some system or other before we end this session. Do you mean to tax America, and to draw a productive revenue from thence? If you do, speak out; name, fix, ascertain this revenue; settle its quantity; define its objects; provide for its collection; and then fight when you have something to fight for. If you murder, rob; if you kill, take possession: and do not appear in the character of madmen, as well as assassins—violent, vindictive, bloody, and tyrannical, without an object. But may better counsels guide you!

Again and again revert to your own principles; seek peace and ensue it; leave America, if she has taxable matter in her, to tax herself. I am not here going into the distinctions of rights, not attempting to mark their boundaries. I do not enter into these metaphysical distinctions; I hate the very sound of them. Leave the Americans as they anciently stood, and these distinctions, born of our unhappy contest, will die along with it. They and we, and their and our ancestors, have been happy under that system. Let the memory of all actions, in contradiction to that good old mode, on both sides be extinguished forever. Be content to

bind America by laws of trade; you have always done it. Let this be your reason for binding their trade. Do not burthen them by taxes; you were not used to do so from the beginning. Let this be your reason for not taxing. These are the arguments of states and kingdoms. Leave the rest to the schools; for there only they may be discussed with safety. But if intemperately, unwisely, fatally, you sophisticate and poison the very source of government, by urging subtle deductions and consequences odious to those you govern, from the unlimited and illimitable nature of supreme sovereignty you will teach them by these means to call that sovereignty itself in question. When you drive him hard, the boar will surely turn upon the hunters. If that sovereignty and their freedom cannot be reconciled, which will they take? They will cast your sovereignty in your face. Nobody will be argued into slavery. Sir, let the gentlemen on the other side call forth all their ability; let the best of them get up and tell me what one character of liberty the Americans have, and what one brand of slavery they are free from, if they are bound in their property and industry by all the restraints you can imagine on commerce, and at the same time are made pack-horses of every tax you choose to impose, without the least share in granting them. When they bear the burthens of unlimited monopoly, will you bring them to bear the burthens of unlimited revenue too? The Englishman in America will feel that this is slavery—that it is *legal* slavery, will be no compensation, either to his feelings or his understanding.

If this be the case, ask yourselves this question: Will they be content in such a state of slavery? If not, look to the consequences. Reflect how you are to govern a people who think they ought to be free, and think they are not. Your scheme yields no revenue; it yields nothing but discontent, disorder, disobedience; and such is the state of America that after wading up to your eyes in blood, you could only end just where you begun—that is, to tax where no revenue is to be found, to—— my voice fails me; my inclination indeed carries me no farther—all is confusion beyond it.

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I charge therefore to this new and unfortunate system the loss not only of peace, of union, and of commerce, but even of revenue, which its friends are contending for. It is morally certain that we have lost at least a million of free grants since the peace. I think we have lost a great deal more and that those who look for a revenue from the provinces never could have pursued, even in that light, a course more directly repugnant to their purposes.

Now, Sir, I trust I have shown, first on that narrow ground which the honorable gentleman measured, that you are likely to lose nothing by complying with the motion, except what you have lost already. I have shown afterward that in time of peace you flourished in commerce and, when war required it, had sufficient aid from the colonies while you pursued your ancient policy; that you threw everything into confusion when you made the stamp act; and that you restored every-



thing to peace and order when you repealed it. I have shown that the revival of the system of taxation has produced the very worst effects; and that the partial repeal has produced, not partial good, but universal evil. Let these considerations, founded on facts, not one of which can be denied, bring us back to our reason by the road of our experience.

I cannot, as I have said, answer for mixed measures; but surely this mixture of lenity would give the whole a better chance of success. When you once regain confidence, the way will be clear before you. Then you may enforce the act of navigation when it ought to be enforced. You will yourselves open it where it ought still further to be opened. Proceed in what you do, whatever you do, from policy, and not from rancor. Let us act like men; let us act like statesmen. Let us hold some sort of consistent conduct. It is agreed that a revenue is not to be had in America. If we lose the profit, let us get rid of the odium.

On this business of America I confess I am serious even to sadness. I have had but one opinion concerning it since I sat, and before I sat, in Parliament. The noble lord<sup>1</sup> will, as usual, probably attribute the part taken by me and my friends in this business to a desire of getting his places. Let him enjoy this happy and original idea. If I deprived him of it, I should take away most of his wit, and all his argument. But I had rather bear the brunt of all his wit, and indeed blows much heavier, than stand answerable to God for embracing a system that tends to the destruction

1. Lord North.

of some of the very best and fairest of his works. But I know the map of England, as well as the noble lord, or as any other person, and I know that the way I take is not the road to preferment. My excellent and honorable friend under me on the floor has trod that road with great toil for upwards of twenty years together. He is not yet arrived at the noble lord's destination. However, the tracks of my worthy friend are those I have ever wished to follow; because I know they lead to honor. Long may we tread the same road together; whoever may accompany us, or whoever may laugh at us on our journey! I honestly and solemnly declare I have in all seasons adhered to the system of 1766, for no other reason than that I think it laid deep in your truest interest, and that by limiting the exercise it fixes, on the firmest foundations, a real, consistent, well-grounded authority in parliament. Until you come back to that system, there will be no peace for England.

THE LETTER TO THE SHERIFFS OF BRISTOL ON THE  
AFFAIRS OF AMERICA, WRITTEN APRIL 3, 1777

GENTLEMEN: I have the honor of sending you the two last acts which have been passed with regard to the troubles in America. These acts are similar to all the rest which have been made on the same subject. They operate by the same principle, and they are derived from the very same policy. I think they complete the number of this sort of statutes to nine. It affords no matter for very pleasing reflection to observe that our subjects diminish as our laws increase.

If I have the misfortune of differing with some of my fellow-citizens on this great and arduous subject, it is no small consolation to me that I do not differ from you. With you I am perfectly united. We are heartily agreed in our detestation of a civil war. We have ever expressed the most unqualified disapprobation of all the steps which have led to it, and of all those which tend to prolong it. And I have no doubt that we feel exactly the same emotions of grief and shame in all its miserable consequences; whether they appear, on the one side or the other, in the shape of victories or defeats, or captures made from the English on the continent, or from the English in these islands, of legislative regulations which subvert the liberties of our brethren, or which undermine our own.

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That you may be enabled to enter into the true spirit of the present law, it is necessary, gentlemen, to apprise you that there is an act, made so long ago as in the reign of Henry the Eighth, before the existence or thought of any English colonies in America, for the trial in this kingdom of treasons committed out of the realm. In the year 1769 Parliament thought proper to acquaint the crown with their construction of that act in a formal address, wherein they entreated his Majesty to cause persons charged with high treason in America, to be brought into this kingdom for trial. By this act of Henry the Eighth, *so construed and so applied*, almost all that is substantial and beneficial in a trial by a jury is taken away from the subject in the colonies. This is however saying too little; for to

try a man under that act is, in effect, to condemn him unheard. A person is brought hither in the dungeon of a ship's hold; thence he is vomited into a dungeon on land; loaded with irons, unfurnished with money, unsupported by friends, three thousand miles from all means of calling upon or confronting evidence, where no one local circumstance that tends to detect perjury can possibly be judged of. Such a person may be executed according to form, but he can never be tried according to justice.

I therefore could never reconcile myself to the bill I send you, which is expressly provided to remove all inconveniences from the establishment of a mode of trial which has ever appeared to me most unjust and most unconstitutional. Far from removing the difficulties which impede the execution of so mischievous a project, I would heap new difficulties upon it, if it were in my power. All the ancient, honest, juridical principles and institutions of England are so many clogs to check and retard the headlong course of violence and oppression. They were invented for this one good purpose, that what was not just should not be convenient. Convinced of this, I would leave things as I found them. The old, cool-headed, general law is as good as any deviation dictated by present heat.

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I take it for granted, gentlemen, that we sympathize in a proper horror of all punishment further than as it serves for an example. To whom then does the example of an execution in England for this American rebellion apply? Remember you are told every day

that the present is a contest between the two countries, and that we in England are at war for *our own* dignity against our rebellious children. Is this true? If it be, it is surely among such rebellious children that examples for disobedience should be made, to be in any degree instructive; for who ever thought of teaching parents their duty by an example from the punishment of an undutiful son? As well might the execution of a fugitive negro in the plantations be considered as a lesson to teach masters humanity to their slaves. Such executions may indeed satiate our revenge; they may harden our hearts, and puff us up with pride and arrogance. Alas! this is not instruction!

If anything can be drawn from such examples by a parity of the case, it is to show how deep their crime and how heavy their punishment will be who shall at any time dare to resist a distant power actually disposing of their property, without their voice or consent to the disposition, and overturning their franchises without charge or hearing. God forbid that England should ever read this lesson written in the blood of *any* of her offspring!

War is at present carried on between the king's natural and foreign troops on one side, and the English in America on the other, upon the usual footing of other wars; and accordingly an exchange of prisoners has been regularly made from the beginning. If notwithstanding this hitherto equal procedure, upon some prospect of ending the war with success (which however may be delusive), administration prepares



to act against those as *traitors* who remain in their hands at the end of the troubles, in my opinion we shall exhibit to the world as indecent a piece of injustice as ever civil fury has produced. If the prisoners who have been exchanged have not by that exchange been *virtually pardoned*, the cartel (whether avowed or understood) is a cruel fraud; for you have received the life of a man, and you ought to return a life for it, or there is no parity of fairness in the transaction.

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The act of which I speak is among the fruits of the American war; a war in my humble opinion productive of many mischiefs, of a kind which distinguish it from all others. Not only our policy is deranged, and our empire distracted, but our laws and our legislative spirit appear to have been totally perverted by it. We have made war on our colonies, not by arms only, but by laws. As hostility and law are not very concordant ideas, every step we have taken in this business has been made by trampling on some maxim of justice, or some capital principle of wise government. What precedents were established and what principles overturned—I will not say of English privilege, but of general justice—in the Boston Port, the Massachusetts Charter, the Military Bill, and all that long array of hostile acts of Parliament by which the war with America has been begun and supported! Had the principles of any of these acts been first exerted on English ground, they would probably have expired as soon as they touched it. But by being removed from our per-

sons they have rooted in our laws, and the latest posterity will taste the fruits of them.

Nor is it the worst effect of this unnatural contention, that our *laws* are corrupted. Whilst *manners* remain entire, they will correct the vices of law, and soften it at length to their own temper. But we have to lament that in most of the late proceedings we see very few traces of that generosity, humanity, and dignity of mind which formerly characterized this nation. War suspends the rules of moral obligation, and what is long suspended is in danger of being totally abrogated. Civil wars strike deepest of all into the manners of the people. They vitiate their politics; they corrupt their morals; they pervert even the natural taste and relish of equity and justice. By teaching us to consider our fellow-citizens in a hostile light the whole body of our nation becomes gradually less dear to us. The very names of affection and kindred, which were the bond of charity whilst we agreed, become new incentives to hatred and rage when the communion of our country is dissolved. We may flatter ourselves that we shall not fall into this misfortune. But we have no charter of exemption, that I know of, from the ordinary frailties of our nature.

What but that blindness of heart which arises from the frenzy of civil contention, could have made any persons conceive the present situation of the British affairs as an object of triumph to themselves, or of congratulation to their sovereign? Nothing surely could be more lamentable to those who remember the flourishing days of this kingdom than to see the insane joy

of several unhappy people, amidst the sad spectacle which our affairs and conduct exhibit to the scorn of Europe. We behold (and it seems some people rejoice in beholding) our native land, which used to sit the envied arbiter of all her neighbors, reduced to a servile dependence on their mercy, acquiescing in assurances of friendship which she does not trust, complaining of hostilities which she dares not resent, deficient to her allies, lofty to her subjects and submissive to her enemies, whilst the liberal government of this free nation is supported by the hireling sword of German boors and vassals, and three millions of the subjects of Great Britain are seeking for protection to English privileges in the arms of France!

These circumstances appear to me more like shocking prodigies than natural changes in human affairs. Men of firmer minds may see them without staggering or astonishment. Some may think them matters of congratulation and complimentary addresses; but I trust your candor will be so indulgent to my weakness, as not to have the worse opinion of me for my declining to participate in this joy, and my rejecting all share whatsoever in such a triumph. I am too old, too stiff in my inveterate partialities, to be ready at all the fashionable evolutions of opinion. I scarcely know how to adapt my mind to the feelings with which the court gazettes mean to impress the people. It is not instantly that I can be brought to rejoice when I hear of the slaughter and captivity of long lists of those names which have been familiar to my ears from my infancy, and to rejoice that they have fallen under the

sword of strangers whose barbarous appellations I scarcely know how to pronounce. The glory acquired at the White Plains by Colonel Raille has no charms for me; and I fairly acknowledge that I have not yet learned to delight in finding Fort Kniphausen in the heart of the British dominions.

It might be some consolation for the loss of our old regards if our reason were enlightened in proportion as our honest prejudices are removed. Wanting feelings for the honor of our country, we might then in cold blood be brought to think a little of our interests as individual citizens, and our private conscience as moral agents.

Indeed our affairs are in a bad condition. I do assure those gentlemen who have prayed for war, and have obtained the blessing they have sought, that they are at this instant in very great straits. The abused wealth of this country continues a little longer to feel its distemper. As yet they, and their German allies of twenty hireling states, have contended only with the unprepared strength of our own infant colonies. But America is not subdued. Not one unattacked village which was originally adverse throughout that vast continent has yet submitted from love or terror. You have the ground you encamp on, and you have no more. The cantonments of your troops and your dominions are exactly of the same extent. You spread devastation, but you do not enlarge the sphere of authority.

The events of this war are of so much greater magnitude than those who either wished or feared it ever looked for that this alone ought to fill every consid-

erate mind with anxiety and diffidence. Wise men often tremble at the very things which fill the thoughtless with security. For many reasons I do not choose to expose to public view all the particulars of the state in which you stood with regard to foreign powers during the whole course of the last year. Whether you are yet wholly out of danger from them is more than I know, or than your rulers can divine. But even if I were certain of my safety, I could not easily forgive those who had brought me into the most dreadful perils, because by accidents, unforeseen by them or me, I have escaped.

Believe me, gentlemen, the way still before you is intricate, dark, and full of perplexed and treacherous mazes. Those who think they have the clue may lead us out of this labyrinth. We may trust them as amply as we think proper; but as they have most certainly a call for all the reason which their stock can furnish, why should we think it proper to disturb its operation by inflaming their passions? I may be unable to lend an helping hand to those who direct the state, but I should be ashamed to make myself one of a noisy multitude to halloo and hearten them into doubtful and dangerous courses. A conscientious man would be cautious how he dealt in blood. He would feel some apprehension at being called to a tremendous account for engaging in so deep a play, without any sort of knowledge of the game. It is no excuse for presumptuous ignorance that it is directed by insolent passion. The poorest being that crawls on earth, contending to save itself from injustice and oppression,



is an object respectable in the eyes of God and man. But I cannot conceive any existence under heaven (which, in the depths of its wisdom, tolerates all sorts of things) that is more truly odious and disgusting, than an impotent, helpless creature, without civil wisdom or military skill, without a consciousness of any other qualification for power but his servility to it, bloated with pride and arrogance, calling for battles which he is not to fight, contending for a violent dominion which he can never exercise, and satisfied to be himself mean and miserable, in order to render others contemptible and wretched.

If you and I find our talents not of the great and ruling kind, our conduct at least is conformable to our faculties. No man's life pays the forfeit of our rashness. No desolate widow weeps tears of blood over our ignorance. Scrupulous and sober in our well-grounded distrust of ourselves, we would keep in the port of peace and security; and perhaps in recommending to others something of the same diffidence we should show ourselves more charitable in their welfare than injurious to their abilities.

There are many circumstances in the zeal shown for civil war which seem to discover but little of real magnanimity. The addressers offer their own persons, and they are satisfied with hiring Germans. They promise their private fortunes, and they mortgage their country. They have all the merit of volunteers, without risk of person or charge of contribution; and when the unfeeling arm of a foreign soldiery pours out their kindred blood like water, they exult and triumph as

if they themselves had performed some notable exploit. I am really ashamed of the fashionable language which has been held for some time past, which, to say the best of it, is full of levity. You know that I allude to the general cry against the cowardice of the Americans, as if we despised them for not making the king's soldiery purchase the advantage they have obtained at a dearer rate. It is not, gentlemen, it is not to respect the dispensations of Providence, nor to provide any decent retreat in the mutability of human affairs. It leaves no medium between insolent victory and infamous defeat. It tends to alienate our minds farther and farther from our natural regards, and to make an eternal rent and schism in the British nation. Those who do not wish for such a separation would not dissolve that cement of reciprocal esteem and regard which can alone bind together the parts of this great fabric. It ought to be our wish, as it is our duty, not only to forbear this style of outrage ourselves, but to make every one as sensible as we can of the impropriety and unworthiness of the tempers which give rise to it, and which designing men are laboring with such malignant industry to diffuse amongst us. It is our business to counteract them if possible; if possible, to awake our natural regards; and to revive the old partiality to the English name. Without something of this kind I do not see how it is ever practicable really to reconcile with those whose affection, after all, must be the surest hold of our government; and which is a thousand times more worth to us than the mercenary zeal of all the circles of Germany.

I can well conceive a country completely overrun, and miserably wasted, without approaching in the least to settlement. In my apprehension, as long as English government is attempted to be supported over Englishmen by the sword alone, things will thus continue. I anticipate in my mind the moment of the final triumph of foreign military force. When that hour arrives (for it may arrive), then it is that all this mass of weakness and violence will appear in its full light. If we should be expelled from America, the delusion of the partisans of military government might still continue. They might still feed their imaginations with the possible good consequences which might have attended success. Nobody could prove the contrary by facts. But in case the sword should do all that the sword can do, the success of their arms and the defeat of their policy will be one and the same thing. You will never see any revenue from America. Some increase of the means of corruption, without ease of the public burthens, is the very best that can happen. Is it for this that we are at war—and in such a war?

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This outrageous language, which has been encouraged and kept alive by every art, has already done incredible mischief. For a long time, even amidst the desolations of war and the insults of hostile laws daily accumulated on one another, the American leaders seem to have had the greatest difficulty in bringing up their people to a declaration of total independence. But the court gazette accomplished what the abettors of independence had attempted in vain. When that

disingenuous compilation, and strange medley of railing and flattery, was adduced as a proof of the united sentiments of the people of Great Britain, there was a great change throughout all America. The tide of popular affection, which had still set towards the parent country, begun immediately to turn, and to flow with great rapidity in a contrary course. Far from concealing these wild declarations of enmity, the author of the celebrated pamphlet which prepared the minds of the people for independence, insists largely on the multitude and the spirit of these addresses; and he draws an argument from them which, if the fact was as he supposes, must be irresistible. For I never knew a writer on the theory of government so partial to authority as not to allow that the hostile mind of the rulers to their people did fully justify a change of government; nor can any reason whatever be given why one people should voluntarily yield any degree of pre-eminence to another, but on a supposition of great affection and benevolence towards them. Unfortunately your rulers, trusting to other things, took no notice of this great principle of connection. From the beginning of this affair they have done all they could to alienate your minds from your own kindred; and if they could excite hatred enough in one of the parties towards the other, they seemed to be of opinion that they had gone half the way towards reconciling the quarrel.

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Tolerated in their passions, let them learn not to persecute the moderation of their fellow-citizens. If

all the world joined them in a full cry against rebellion, and were as hotly inflamed against the whole theory and enjoyment of freedom as those who are the most factious for servitude, it could not in my opinion answer any one end whatsoever in this contest. The leaders of this war could not hire (to gratify their friends) one German more than they do; or inspire him with less feeling for the persons, or less value for the privileges, of their revolted brethren. If we all adopted their sentiments to a man, their allies, the savage Indians, could not be more ferocious than they are: they could not murder one more helpless woman or child, or with more exquisite refinements of cruelty torment to death one more of their English flesh and blood than they do already. The public money is given to purchase this alliance—and they have their bargain.

They are continually boasting of unanimity, or calling for it. But before this unanimity can be matter either of wish or congratulation, we ought to be pretty sure that we are engaged in a rational pursuit. Frenzy does not become a slighter distemper on account of the number of those who may be infected with it. Delusion and weakness produce not one mischief the less because they are universal. I declare that I cannot discern the least advantage which could accrue to us if we were able to persuade our colonies that they had not a single friend in Great Britain. On the contrary, if the affections and opinions of mankind be not exploded as principles of connection, I conceive it would be happy for us if they were taught to believe that there was



even a formed American party in England, to whom they could always look for support! Happy would it be for us if, in all tempers, they might turn their eyes to the parent state, so that their very turbulence and sedition should find vent in no other place than this. I believe there is not a man (except those who prefer the interest of some paltry faction to the very being of their country) who would not wish that the Americans should from time to time carry many points, and even some of them not quite reasonable, by the aid of any denomination of men here, rather than they should be driven to seek for protection against the fury of foreign mercenaries, and the waste of savages, in the arms of France.

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If there be one fact in the world perfectly clear, it is this: "That the disposition of the people of America is wholly averse to any other than a free government"; and this is indication enough to any honest statesman how he ought to adapt whatever power he finds in his hands to their case. If any ask me what a free government is, I answer that, for any practical purpose, it is what the people think so; and that they, and not I, are the natural, lawful, and competent judges of this matter. If they practically allow me a greater degree of authority over them than is consistent with any correct ideas of perfect freedom, I ought to thank them for so great a trust, and not to endeavor to prove from thence that they have reasoned amiss and that, having gone so far, by analogy they must hereafter have no enjoyment but by my pleasure.

If we had seen this done by any others, we should have concluded them far gone in madness. It is melancholy as well as ridiculous to observe the kind of reasoning with which the public has been amused, in order to divert our minds from the common sense of our American policy. There are people who have split and anatomized the doctrine of free government as if it were an abstract question concerning metaphysical liberty and necessity, and not a matter of moral prudence and natural feeling. They have disputed whether liberty be a positive or a negative idea; whether it does not consist in being governed by laws, without considering what are the laws, or who are the makers; whether man has any rights by nature; and whether all the property he enjoys be not the alms of his government, and his life itself their favor and indulgence. Others, corrupting religion as these have perverted philosophy, contend that Christians are redeemed into captivity and the blood of the Savior of mankind has been shed to make them the slaves of a few proud and insolent sinners. These shocking extremes provoking to extremes of another kind, speculations are let loose as destructive to all authority as the former are to all freedom; and every government is called tyranny and usurpation which is not formed on their fancies. In this manner the stirrers-up of this contention, not satisfied with distracting our dependencies and filling them with blood and slaughter, are corrupting our understandings: they are endeavoring to tear up, along with practical liberty, all the foundations of human society, all equity and justice, religion and order.

The war is now of full two years' standing; the controversy of many more. In different periods of the dispute different methods of reconciliation were to be pursued. I mean to trouble you with a short state of things at the most important of these periods, in order to give you a more distinct idea of our policy with regard to this most delicate of all objects. The colonies were from the beginning subject to the legislature of Great Britain, on principles which they never examined; and we permitted to them many local privileges, without asking how they agreed with that legislative authority. Modes of administration were formed in an insensible and very unsystematic manner. But they gradually adapted themselves to the varying conditions of things. What was first a single kingdom stretched into an empire, and an imperial superintendency of some kind or other became necessary. Parliament, from a mere representative of the people and a guardian of popular privileges for its own immediate constituents, grew into a mighty sovereign. Instead of being a control on the crown on its own behalf it communicated a sort of strength to the royal authority, which was wanted for the conservation of a new object, but which could not be safely trusted to the crown alone. On the other hand, the colonies, advancing by equal steps and governed by the same necessity, had formed within themselves, either by royal instruction or royal charter, assemblies so exceedingly resembling a parliament in all their forms, functions, and powers that it was impossible they should not imbibe some opinion of a similar authority.

At the first designation of these assemblies they were probably not intended for anything more (nor perhaps did they think themselves much higher) than the municipal corporations within this island, to which some at present love to compare them. But nothing in progression can rest on its original plan. We may as well think of rocking a grown man in the cradle of an infant. Therefore as the colonies prospered and increased to a numerous and mighty people, spreading over a very great tract of the globe, it was natural that they should attribute to assemblies so respectable in their formal constitution some part of the dignity of the great nations which they represented. No longer tied to by-laws, these assemblies made acts of all sorts and in all cases whatsoever. They levied money, not for parochial purposes, but upon regular grants to the crown, following all the rules and principles of a parliament, to which they approached every day more and more nearly. Those who think themselves wiser than Providence, and stronger than the course of nature, may complain of all this variation, on the one side or the other, as their several humors and prejudices may lead them. But things could not be otherwise; and English colonies must be had on these terms, or not had at all. In the meantime, neither party felt any inconvenience from this double legislature to which they had been formed by imperceptible habits and old custom, the great support of all the governments in the world. Though these two legislatures were sometimes found perhaps performing the very same functions, they did not very grossly or systematically clash.

In all likelihood this arose from mere neglect; possibly from the natural operation of things, which, left to themselves, generally fall into their proper order. But whatever was the cause, it is certain that a regular revenue, by the authority of Parliament, for the support of civil and military establishments, seems not to have been thought of until the colonies were too proud to submit, too strong to be forced, too enlightened not to see all the consequences which must arise from such a system.

If ever this scheme of taxation was to be pushed against the inclinations of the people, it was evident that discussions must arise which would let loose all the elements that composed this double constitution; would show how much each of their members had departed from its original principles; and would discover contradictions in each legislature, as well to its own first principles as to its relation to the other, very difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to be reconciled.

Therefore at the first fatal opening of this contest the wisest course seemed to be to put an end as soon as possible to the immediate causes of the dispute; and to quiet a discussion, not easily settled upon clear principles, and arising from claims which pride would permit neither party to abandon, by resorting as nearly as possible to the old, successful course. A mere repeal of the obnoxious tax, with a declaration of the legislative authority of this kingdom, was then fully sufficient to procure peace to *both sides*. Man is a creature of habit, and, the first breach being of very short continuance, the colonies fell back exactly into their an-



cient state. The congress has used an expression with regard to this pacification which appears to me truly significant. After the repeal of the stamp act "the colonies fell," says this assembly, "into their ancient state of *unsuspecting confidence in the mother country.*" This unsuspecting confidence is the true center of gravity amongst mankind, about which all the parts are at rest. It is this *unsuspecting confidence* that removes all difficulties, and reconciles all the contradictions which occur in the complexity of all ancient, puzzled, political establishments. Happy are the rulers which have the secret of preserving it!

The whole empire has reason to remember, with eternal gratitude, the wisdom and temper of that man and his excellent associates who, to recover this confidence, formed a plan of pacification in 1766. That plan, being built upon the nature of man, and the circumstances and habits of the two countries, and not on any visionary speculations, perfectly answered its end as long as it was thought proper to adhere to it. Without giving a rude shock to the dignity (well or ill understood) of this Parliament, they gave perfect content to our dependencies. Had it not been for the mediatorial spirit and talents of that great man, between such clashing pretensions and passions, we should then have rushed headlong (I know what I say) into the calamities of that civil war in which, by departing from his system, we are at length involved; and we should have been precipitated into that war at a time when circumstances both at home and abroad were far, very far, more unfavorable unto us than they were at the breaking out of the present troubles.

I had the happiness of giving my first votes in Parliament for their pacification. I was one of those almost unanimous members who, in the necessary concessions of Parliament, would as much as possible have preserved its authority and respected its honor. I could not at once tear from my heart prejudices which were dear to me, and which bore a resemblance to virtue. I had then, and I have still, my partialities. What Parliament gave up I wished to be given as of grace, and favor, and affection, and not as a restitution of stolen goods. High dignity relented as it was soothed; and a benignity from old acknowledged greatness had its full effect on our dependencies. Our unlimited declaration of legislative authority produced not a single murmur. If this undefined power has become odious since that time, and full of horror to the colonies, it is because the *unsuspicious confidence* is lost, and the parental affection, in the bosom of whose boundless authority they reposed their privileges, is become estranged and hostile.

It will be asked: If such was then my opinion of the mode of pacification, how I came to be the very person who moved, not only for a repeal of all the late coercive statutes, but for mutilating, by a positive law, the entireness of the legislative power of Parliament, and cutting off from it the whole right of taxation? I answer, Because a different state of things requires a different conduct. When the dispute had gone to these last extremities (which no man labored more to prevent than I did), the concessions which had satisfied in the beginning could satisfy no longer, because

the violation of tacit faith required explicit security. The same cause which has introduced all formal compacts and covenants among men made it necessary. I mean habits of soreness, jealousy, and distrust. I parted with it as with a limb, but as a limb to save the body; and I would have parted with more, if more had been necessary—anything rather than a fruitless, hopeless, unnatural civil war. This mode of yielding would, it is said, give way to independency, without a war. I am persuaded from the nature of things, and from every information, that it would have had a directly contrary effect. But if it had this effect, I confess that I should prefer independency without war to independency with it; and I have so much trust in the inclinations and prejudices of mankind, and so little in anything else, that I should expect ten times more benefit to this kingdom from the affection of America, though under a separate establishment, than from her perfect submission to the crown and Parliament, accompanied with her terror, disgust, and abhorrence. Bodies tied together by so unnatural a bond of union as mutual hatred are only connected to their ruin.

One hundred and ten respectable members of Parliament voted for that concession. Many not present when the motion was made were of the sentiments of those who voted. I knew it would then have made peace. I am not without hopes that it would do so at present if it were adopted. No benefit, no revenue, could be lost by it; something might possibly be gained by its consequences. For be fully assured that, of all the phantoms that ever deluded the fond hopes of a

credulous world, a parliamentary revenue in the colonies is the most perfectly chimerical. Your breaking them to any subjections, far from relieving your burthens (the pretext for this war), will never pay that military force which will be kept up to the destruction of their liberties and yours. I risk nothing in this prophecy.

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This, gentlemen, has been from the beginning the rule of my conduct; and I mean to continue it as long as such a body as I have described can by any possibility be kept together; for I should think it the most dreadful of all offenses, not only towards the present generation, but to all the future, if I were to do anything which could make the minutest breach in this great conservatory of free principles. Those who perhaps have the same intentions, but are separated by some little political animosities, will I hope discern at last how little conducive it is to any rational purpose to lower its reputation. For my part, gentlemen, from much experience, from no little thinking, and from comparing a great variety of things, I am thoroughly persuaded that the last hopes of preserving the spirit of the English constitution, or of reuniting the dissipated members of the English race upon a common plan of tranquillity and liberty, does entirely depend on their firm and lasting union; and above all on their keeping themselves from that despair which is so very apt to fall on those whom a violence of character and a mixture of ambitious views do not support through a long, painful, and unsuccessful struggle.

There never, gentlemen, was a period in which the steadfastness of some men has been put to so sore a trial. It is not very difficult for well-formed minds to abandon their interest; but the separation of fame and virtue is a harsh divorce. Liberty is in danger of being made unpopular to Englishmen. Contending for an imaginary power, we begin to acquire the spirit of domination, and to lose the relish of honest equality. The principles of our forefathers become suspected to us, because we see them animating the present opposition of our children. The faults which grow out of the luxuriance of freedom appear much more shocking to us than the base vices which are generated from the rankness of servitude. Accordingly the least resistance to power appears more inexcusable in our eyes than the greatest abuses of authority. All dread of a standing military force is looked upon as a superstitious panic. All shame of calling in foreigners and savages in a civil contest is worn off. We grow indifferent to the consequences inevitable to ourselves from the plan of ruling half the empire by a mercenary sword. We are taught to believe that a desire of domineering over our countrymen is love to our country; that those who hate civil war abet rebellion, and that the amiable and conciliatory virtues of lenity, moderation, and tenderness to the privileges of those who depend on this kingdom are a sort of treason to the state.

It is impossible that we should remain long in a situation which breeds such notions and dispositions, without some great alteration in the national character. Those ingenuous and feeling minds who are so fortified



against all other things, and so unarmed to whatever approaches in the shape of disgrace, finding these principles, which they considered as sure means of honor, to be grown into disrepute, will retire disheartened and disgusted. Those of a more robust make—the bold, able, ambitious men, who pay some of their court to power through the people, and substitute the voice of transient opinion in the place of true glory—will give in to the general mode; and those superior understandings which ought to correct vulgar prejudices will confirm and aggravate its errors. Many things have been long operating towards a gradual change in our principles. But this American war has done more in a very few years than all the other causes could have effected in a century. It is therefore not on its own separate account, but because of its attendant circumstances, that I consider its continuance, or its ending in any way but that of an honorable and liberal accommodation, as the greatest evil which can befall us. For that reason I have troubled you with this long letter. For that reason I entreat you again and again, neither to be persuaded, shamed, or frightened out of the principles that have hitherto led so many of you to abhor the war, its cause, and its consequences. Let us not be among the first who renounce the maxims of our forefathers.

I have the honor to be, gentlemen, your most obedient and faithful humble servant,

EDMUND BURKE.

BEACONSFIELD, April 3, 1777.

THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF THE PRESENT  
DISCONTENTS

Nobody, I believe, will consider it merely as the language of spleen or disappointment if I say that there is something particularly alarming in the present conjuncture. There is hardly a man, in or out of power, who holds any other language. That government is at once dreaded and contemned; that the laws are despoiled of all their respected and salutary terrors; that their inaction is a subject of ridicule, and their exertion of abhorrence; that rank, and office and title, and all the solemn plausibilities of the world have lost their reverence and effect; that our foreign politics are as much deranged as our domestic economy; that our dependencies are slackened in their affection, and loosened from their obedience; that we know neither how to yield nor how to enforce; that hardly anything above or below, abroad or at home, is sound and entire; but that disconnection and confusion, in offices, in parties, in families, in Parliament, in the nation, prevail beyond the disorders of any former time—these are facts universally admitted and lamented.

This state of things is the more extraordinary, because the great parties which formerly divided and agitated the kingdom are known to be in a manner entirely dissolved. No great external calamity has visited our nation; no pestilence or famine. We do not labor at present under any scheme of taxation new or oppressive in the quantity or in the mode. Nor are we engaged in unsuccessful war, in which our misfortunes might easily pervert our judgment, and our

minds, sore from the loss of national glory, might feel every blow of fortune as a crime in government.

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The power of the crown, almost dead and rotten as Prerogative, has grown up anew, with much more strength, and far less odium, under the name of Influence. An influence which operated without noise and without violence, an influence which converted the very antagonist into the instrument of power, which contained in itself a perpetual principle of growth and renovation, and which the distresses and the prosperity of the country equally tended to augment, was an admirable substitute for a prerogative, that, being only the offspring of antiquated prejudices, had moulded in its original stamina irresistible principles of decay and dissolution. The ignorance of the people is a bottom but for a temporary system; the interest of active men in the state is a foundation perpetual and infallible. However, some circumstances, arising, it must be confessed, in a great degree from accident, prevented the effects of this influence for a long time from breaking out in a manner capable of exciting any serious apprehensions. Although government was strong and flourished exceedingly, the court had drawn far less advantage than one would imagine from this great source of power.

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To get rid of all this intermediate and independent importance, and to secure to the court the unlimited and uncontrolled use of its own vast influence, under the sole direction of its own private favor, has for

some years past been the great object of policy. If this were compassed, the influence of the crown must of course produce all the effects which the most sanguine partisans of the court could possibly desire. Government might then be carried on without any concurrence on the part of the people, without any attention to the dignity of the greater, or to the affections of the lower sorts. A new project was therefore devised by a certain set of intriguing men, totally different from the system of administration which had prevailed since the accession of the House of Brunswick. This project, I have heard, was first conceived by some persons in the court of Frederick, Prince of Wales.

The earliest attempt in the execution of this design was to set up for minister a person, in rank indeed respectable, and very ample in fortune; but who, to the moment of this vast and sudden elevation, was little known or considered in the kingdom. To him the whole nation was to yield an immediate and implicit submission. But whether it was from want of firmness to bear up against the first opposition, or that things were not yet fully ripened, or that this method was not found the most eligible, that idea was soon abandoned. The instrumental part of the project was a little altered, to accommodate it to the time and to bring things more gradually and more surely to the one great end proposed.

The first part of the reformed plan was to draw a line which should separate the court from the ministry. Hitherto these names had been looked upon as synon-

ymous; but for the future, court and administration were to be considered as things totally distinct. By this operation two systems of administration were to be formed: one which should be in the real secret and confidence, the other merely ostensible to perform the official and executory duties of government. The latter were alone to be responsible; whilst the real advisers, who enjoyed all the power, were effectually removed from all the danger.

Secondly, a party under these leaders was to be formed in favor of the court against the ministry: this party was to have a large share in the emoluments of government, and to hold it totally separate from, and independent of, ostensible administration.

The third point, and that on which the success of the whole scheme ultimately depended, was to bring Parliament to an acquiescence in this project. Parliament was therefore to be taught by degrees a total indifference to the persons, rank, influence, abilities, connections, and character of the ministers of the crown. By means of a discipline, on which I shall say more hereafter, that body was to be habituated to the most opposite interests, and the most discordant politics. All connections and dependencies among subjects were to be entirely dissolved. As hitherto business had gone through the hands of leaders of Whigs or Tories, men of talents to conciliate the people and to engage their confidence, now the method was to be altered, and the lead was to be given to men of no sort of consideration or credit in the country. This want of natural importance was to be their very title



to delegated power. Members of Parliament were to be hardened into an insensibility to pride as well as to duty. Those high and haughty sentiments, which are the great support of independence, were to be let down gradually. Points of honor and precedence were no more to be regarded in Parliamentary decorum than in a Turkish army. It was to be avowed, as a constitutional maxim, that the king might appoint one of his footmen for minister; and that he ought to be, and that he would be, as well followed as the first name for rank or wisdom in the nation. Thus Parliament was to look on as if perfectly unconcerned while a cabal of the closet and back-stairs was substituted in the place of a national administration.

With such a degree of acquiescence, any measure of any court might well be deemed thoroughly secure. The capital objects, and by much the most flattering characteristics of arbitrary power, would be obtained. Everything would be drawn from its holdings in the country to the personal favor and inclination of the prince. This favor would be the sole introduction to power, and the only tenure by which it was to be held; so that no person looking towards another, and all looking toward the court, it was impossible but that the motive which solely influenced every man's hopes must come in time to govern every man's conduct; till at last the servility became universal, in spite of the dead letter of any laws or institutions whatsoever.

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In the first place, they proceeded gradually, but not slowly, to destroy everything of strength which did not

derive its principal nourishment from the immediate pleasure of the court. The greatest weight of popular opinion and party connection were then with the Duke of Newcastle and Mr. Pitt. Neither of these held their importance by the new tenure of the court; they were not therefore thought to be so proper as others for the services which were required by that tenure. It happened very favorably for the new system that under a forced coalition there rankled an incurable alienation and disgust between the parties which composed the administration. Mr. Pitt was first attacked. Not satisfied with removing him from power, they endeavored by various artifices to ruin his character. The other party seemed rather pleased to get rid of so oppressive a support; not perceiving, that their own fall was prepared by his, and involved in it. Many other reasons prevented them from daring to look their true situation in the face. To the great Whig families it was extremely disagreeable, and seemed almost unnatural, to oppose the administration of a prince of the House of Brunswick. Day after day they hesitated, and doubted, and lingered, expecting that other counsels would take place; and were slow to be persuaded that all which had been done by the cabal was the effect not of humor, but of system. It was more strongly and evidently the interest of the new court faction to get rid of the great Whig connections than to destroy Mr. Pitt. The power of that gentleman was vast indeed and merited; but it was in a great degree personal, and therefore transient. Theirs was rooted in the country. For, with a good deal less of popularity, they possessed a far

more natural and fixed influence. Long possession of government; vast property; obligations of favors given and received; connection of office; ties of blood, of alliance, of friendship (things at that time supposed of some force); the name of Whig, dear to the majority of the people; the zeal early begun and steadily continued to the royal family—all these together formed a body of power in the nation, which was criminal and devoted. The great ruling principle of the cabal, and that which animated and harmonized all their proceedings, how various soever they may have been, was to signify to the world that the court would proceed upon its own proper forces only; and that the pretence of bringing any other into its service was an affront to it, and not a support. Therefore when the chiefs were removed, in order to go to the root, the whole party was put under a proscription, so general and severe as to take their hard-earned bread from the lowest officers in a manner which had never been known before, even in general revolutions. But it was thought necessary effectually to destroy all dependencies but one, and to show an example of the firmness and rigor with which the new system was to be supported.

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These were some of the many artifices used to reconcile the people to the great change which was made in the persons who composed the ministry, and the still greater which was made and avowed in its constitution. As to individuals, other methods were employed with them; in order so thoroughly to disunite every

party, and even every family, that no concert, order, or effect, might appear in any future opposition. And in this manner an administration without connection with the people, or with one another, was first put in possession of government. What good consequences followed from it we have all seen; whether with regard to virtue, public or private, to the ease and happiness of the sovereign, or to the real strength of government. But as so much stress was then laid on the necessity of this new project, it will not be amiss to take a view of the effects of this royal servitude and vile durance, which was so deplored in the reign of the late monarch, and was so carefully to be avoided in the reign of his successor. The effects were these.

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It must be remembered that since the revolution, until the period we are speaking of, the influence of the crown had been always employed in supporting the ministers of state, and in carrying on the public business according to their opinions. But the party now in question is formed upon a very different idea. It is to intercept the favor, protection, and confidence of the crown in the passage to its ministers; it is to come between them and their importance in Parliament; it is to separate them from all their natural and acquired dependencies; it is intended as the control, not the support, of administration. The machinery of this system is perplexed in its movements, and false in principle. It is formed on a supposition that the king is something external to his government; and that he may be honored and aggrandized, even by its debility and dis-

grace. The plan proceeds expressly on the idea of enfeebling the regular executory power. It proceeds on the idea of weakening the state in order to strengthen the court. The scheme depending entirely on distrust, on disconnection, on mutability by principle, on systematic weakness in every particular member, it is impossible that the total result should be substantial strength of any kind.

As a foundation of their scheme, the cabal have established a sort of rota in the court. All sorts of parties, by this means, have been brought into administration; from whence few have had the good fortune to escape without disgrace; none at all without considerable losses. In the beginning of each arrangement no professions of confidence and support are wanting to induce the leading men to engage. But while the ministers of the day appear in all the pomp and pride of power, while they have all their canvas spread out to the wind, and every sail filled with the fair and prosperous gale of royal favor, in a short time they find, they know not how, a current, which sets directly against them, which prevents all progress, and even drives them backwards. They grow ashamed and mortified in a situation which, by its vicinity to power, only serves to remind them the more strongly of their insignificance. They are obliged either to execute the orders of their inferiors, or to see themselves opposed by the natural instruments of their office. With the loss of their dignity they lose their temper. In their turn they grow troublesome to that cabal which, whether it supports or opposes, equally disgraces and



equally betrays them. It is soon found necessary to get rid of the heads of administration; but it is of the heads only. As there always are many rotten members belonging to the best connections, it is not hard to persuade several to continue in office without their leaders. By this means the party goes out much thinner than it came in; and is only reduced in strength by its temporary possession of power. Besides, if by accident, or in course of changes, that power should be recovered, the junto have thrown up a retrenchment of these carcasses, which may serve to cover themselves in a day of danger. They conclude, not unwisely, that such rotten members will become the first objects of disgust and resentment to their ancient connections.

They contrive to form in the outward administration two parties at the least; which, whilst they are tearing one another to pieces, are both competitors for the favor and protection of the cabal; and, by their emulation, contribute to throw everything more and more into the hands of the interior managers.

A minister of state will sometimes keep himself totally estranged from all his colleagues; will differ from them in their councils, will privately traverse, and publicly oppose, their measures. He will, however, continue in his employment. Instead of suffering any mark of displeasure, he will be distinguished by an unbounded profusion of court rewards and caresses, because he does what is expected, and all that is expected, from men in office. He helps to keep some form of administration in being, and keeps it at the same time as weak and divided as possible.

However, we must take care not to be mistaken, or to imagine that such persons have any weight in their opposition. When, by them, administration is convinced of its insignificancy, they are soon to be convinced of their own. They never are suffered to succeed in their opposition. They and the world are to be satisfied that neither office, nor authority, nor property, nor ability, eloquence, skill, or union, are of the least importance; but that the mere influence of the court, naked of all support and destitute of all management, is abundantly sufficient for all its own purposes.

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The members of the court faction are fully indemnified for not holding places on the slippery heights of the kingdom, not only by the lead in all affairs, but also by the perfect security in which they enjoy less conspicuous, but very advantageous situations. Their places are in express legal tenure, or, in effect, all of them for life. Whilst the first and most respectable persons in the kingdom are tossed about like tennis-balls, the sport of a blind and insolent caprice, no minister dares even to cast an oblique glance at the lowest of their body. If an attempt be made upon one of this corps, immediately he flies to sanctuary, and pretends to the most inviolable of all promises. No conveniency of public arrangement is available to remove any one of them from the specific situation he holds; and the slightest attempt upon one of them, by the most powerful minister, is a certain preliminary to his own destruction.

Conscious of their independence, they bear themselves with a lofty air to the exterior ministers. Like janissaries, they derive a kind of freedom from the very condition of their servitude. They may act just as they please, provided they are true to the great ruling principle of their institution. It is, therefore, not at all wonderful that people should be so desirous of adding themselves to that body, in which they may possess and reconcile satisfactions the most alluring, and seemingly the most contradictory, enjoying at once all the spirited pleasure of independence, and all the gross lucre and fat emoluments of servitude.

Here is a sketch, though a slight one, of the constitution, laws, and policy of this new court corporation. The name by which they choose to distinguish themselves is that of king's men or the king's friends, by an invidious exclusion of the rest of his Majesty's most loyal and affectionate subjects. The whole system, comprehending the exterior and interior administrations, is commonly called, in the technical language of the court, double cabinet; in French or English, as you choose to pronounce it.

Whether all this be a vision of a distracted brain, or the invention of a malicious heart, or a real faction in the country, must be judged by the appearances which things have worn for eight years past. Thus far I am certain that there is not a single public man, in or out of office, who has not, at some time or other, borne testimony to the truth of what I have now related. In particular, no persons have been more strong in their assertions, and louder and more in-

decent in their complaints, than those who compose all the exterior part of the present administration; in whose time that faction has arrived at such a height of power, and of boldness in the use of it, as may, in the end, perhaps bring about its total destruction.

It is true, that about four years ago, during the administration of the Marquis of Rockingham, an attempt was made to carry on government without their concurrence. However, this was only a transient cloud; they were hid but for a moment; and their constellation blazed out with greater brightness, and a far more vigorous influence, some time after it was blown over. An attempt was at that time made (but without any idea of proscription) to break their corps, to discountenance their doctrines, to revive connections of a different kind, to restore the principles and policy of the Whigs, to reanimate the cause of liberty by ministerial countenance; and then for the first time were men seen attached in office to every principle they had maintained in opposition. No one will doubt that such men were abhorred and violently opposed by the court faction, and that such a system could have but a short duration.

It may appear somewhat affected that in so much discourse upon this extraordinary party I should say so little of the Earl of Bute, who is the supposed head of it. But this was neither owing to affectation nor inadvertence. I have carefully avoided the introduction of personal reflections of any kind. Much the greater part of the topics which have been used to blacken this nobleman are either unjust or frivolous.

At best, they have a tendency to give the resentment of this bitter calamity a wrong direction, and to turn a public grievance into a mean, personal, or a dangerous national quarrel. Where there is a regular scheme of operations carried on, it is the system, and not any individual person who acts in it, that is truly dangerous. This system has not arisen solely from the ambition of Lord Bute, but from the circumstances which favored it, and from an indifference to the constitution which had been for some time growing among our gentry.

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We are at present at issue upon this point. We are in the great crisis of this contention; and the part which men take, one way or other, will serve to discriminate their characters and their principles. Until the matter is decided, the country will remain in its present confusion. For while a system of administration is attempted, entirely repugnant to the genius of the people, and not conformable to the plan of their government, everything must necessarily be disordered for a time, until this system destroys the constitution, or the constitution gets the better of this system.

There is, in my opinion, a peculiar venom and malignity in this political distemper beyond any that I have heard or read of. In former times the projectors of arbitrary government attacked only the liberties of their country; a design surely mischievous enough to have satisfied a mind of the most unruly ambition. But a system unfavorable to freedom may be so



formed as considerably to exalt the grandeur of the state; and men may find, in the pride and splendor of that prosperity, some sort of consolation for the loss of their solid privileges. Indeed the increase of the power of the state has often been urged by artful men as a pretext for some abridgment of the public liberty. But the scheme of the junto under consideration not only strikes a palsy into every nerve of our free constitution, but in the same degree benumbs and stupefies the whole executive power: rendering government in all its grand operations languid, uncertain, ineffectual; making ministers fearful of attempting, and incapable of executing, any useful plan of domestic arrangement, or of foreign politics. It tends to produce neither the security of a free government, nor the energy of a monarchy that is absolute.

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It behooves the people of England to consider how the House of Commons under the operation of these examples must of necessity be constituted. On the side of the court will be all honors, offices, emoluments, every sort of personal gratification to avarice or vanity; and, what is of more moment to most gentlemen, the means of growing, by innumerable petty services to individuals, into a spreading interest in their country. On the other hand, let us suppose a person unconnected with the court, and in opposition to its system. For his own person no office, or emolument, or title; no promotion, ecclesiastical, or civil, or military, or naval, for children, or brothers, or kindred. In vain an expiring interest in a borough calls for offices,

or small livings, for the children of mayors, and aldermen, and capital burgesses. His court rival has them all. He can do an infinite number of acts of generosity and kindness and even in public spirit. He can procure indemnity from quarters. He can procure advantages in trade. He can get pardons for offences. He can obtain a thousand favors, and avert a thousand evils. He may, while he betrays every valuable interest of the kingdom, be a benefactor, a patron, a father, a guardian angel to his borough. The unfortunate independent member has nothing to offer but harsh refusal, or pitiful excuse, or despondent representation of a hopeless interest. Except from his private fortune, in which he may be equalled, perhaps exceeded, by his court competitor, he has no way of showing any one good quality, or of making a single friend. In the House he votes forever in a dispirited minority. If he speaks, the doors are locked. A body of loquacious placemen go out to tell the world that all he aims at is to get into office. If he has not the talent of elocution, which is the case of many as wise and knowing men as any in the House, he is liable to all these inconveniences, without the éclat which attends upon any tolerably successful exertion of eloquence. Can we conceive a more discouraging post of duty than this? Strip it of the poor reward of popularity; suffer even the excesses committed in defense of the popular interest to become a ground for the majority of that House to form a disqualification out of the line of the law, and at their pleasure, attended not only with the loss of the fran-

chise, but with every kind of personal disgrace. If this shall happen, the people of this kingdom may be assured that they cannot be firmly or faithfully served by any man. It is out of the nature of men and things that they should; and their presumption will be equal to their folly if they expect it. The power of the people, within the laws, must show itself sufficient to protect every representative in the animated performance of his duty, or that duty cannot be performed. The House of Commons can never be a control on other parts of government, unless they are controlled themselves by their constituents; and unless these constituents possess some right in the choice of that House which it is not in the power of that House to take away. If they suffer this power of arbitrary incapacitation to stand, they have utterly perverted every other power of the House of Commons. The late proceeding I will not say is contrary to law; it must be so; for the power which is claimed cannot, by any possibility, be a legal power in any limited member of government.

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If the reader believes that there really exists such a faction as I have described—a faction ruling by the private inclination of a court, against the general sense of the people—and that this faction, whilst it pursues a scheme for undermining all the foundations of our freedom, weakens (for the present at least) all the powers of executory government, rendering us abroad contemptible, and at home distracted; he will believe also that nothing but a firm combination of public men

against this body—and that, too, supported by the hearty concurrence of the people at large—can possibly get the better of it. The people will see the necessity of restoring public men to an attention to the public opinion, and of restoring the constitution to its original principles. Above all, they will endeavor to keep that House of Commons from assuming a character which does not belong to it. They will endeavor to keep that House, for its existence, for its powers, and as dependent upon themselves as possible. This servitude is to a House of Commons (like obedience to the Divine Law) “perfect freedom.” For if they once quit this natural, rational, and liberal obedience, having deserted the only proper foundation of their power, they must seek a support in an abject and unnatural dependence somewhere else. When, through the medium of this just connection with their constituents, the genuine ability of the House of Commons is restored, it will begin to think of casting from it, with scorn, as badges of servility, all the false ornaments of illegal power with which it has been for some time disgraced. It will begin to think of its old office of *Control*. It will not suffer that last of evils to predominate in the country: men without popular confidence, public opinion, natural connection, or mutual trust, invested with all the powers of government.

When they have learned this lesson themselves, they will be willing and able to teach the court that it is the true interest of the prince to have but one administration; and that one composed of those who recommend

themselves to their sovereign through the opinion of their country, and not by their obsequiousness to a favorite. Such men will serve their sovereign with affection and fidelity, because his choice of them, upon such principles, is a compliment to their virtue. They will be able to serve him effectually; because they will add the weight of the country to the force of the executory power. They will be able to serve their king with dignity, because they will never abuse his name to the gratification of their private spleen or avarice. This, with allowances for human frailty, may probably be the general character of a ministry which thinks itself accountable to the House of Commons when the House of Commons thinks itself accountable to its constituents. If other ideals should prevail, things must remain in their present confusion, until they are hurried into all the rage of civil violence, or until they sink into the dead repose of despotism.



## IV

### BURKE'S POWER AS AN ORATOR

EXTRACTS FROM G. O. TREVELYAN'S GEORGE THE  
THIRD AND CHARLES FOX.

. . . Before the year (1777) was out, full particulars of the catastrophe of Saratoga arrived in England. The history of Burgoyne's expedition was one long object lesson on the military value, and moral characteristics, of our Indian allies; and Burke chose an early opportunity for driving that lesson home to the conscience of Parliament. He spoke for more than three hours to a crowded and entranced assembly. Strangers, including of course the newspaper reporters, had been rigorously excluded from the Gallery; and, though Burke was urgently entreated to publish his speech, he could not find the leisure, nor perhaps the inclination, to rekindle in the solitude of his study that flame of rhetoric which had blazed up spontaneously under the genial influence of universal admiration, and all but universal sympathy. It was generally allowed that he had surpassed all his earlier performances. He left no aspect of the question untouched; he stated, in due sequence, every important argument; and, when he let his fancy loose, he traversed the whole scale of oratorical emotion, from the

depth of pathos to the height of unrestrained, audacious, and quite irresistible humor.

Burke began by laying the solid foundation for his case in a series of closely-reasoned passages of which only the outlines remain on record. These Indian tribes, he said, had in the course of years been so reduced in number and power that they were now only formidable from their cruelty, and to use them for warlike purposes was merely to be cruel ourselves in their persons. He called attention to the salient distinction between their employment "against armed and trained soldiers, embodied and encamped, and against unarmed and defenseless men, women, and children, dispersed in their several habitations" over the whole extent of a prosperous and industrious district. He attributed Burgoyne's defeat to the horror excited in the American mind by the prospect of an Indian invasion. The manly and resolute determination of the New England farmers to save their families and their homesteads from these barbarians led them "without regard to party, or to political principle, and in despite of military indisposition, to become soldiers, and to unite as one man in the common defense. Thus was the spectacle exhibited of a resistless army springing up in the woods and deserts." Indians, said Burke, were the most useless, and the most expensive, of all auxiliaries. Each of their so-called braves cost as much as five of the best European musketeers; and, after eating double rations so long as the provisions lasted, they kept out of sight on a day of battle, and deserted wholesale at the first appearance of ill-suc-

cess. They were not less faithless than inefficacious. When Colonel St. Leger found himself in difficulties they turned their weapons, with insolent treachery, against their civilized comrades; and over a circuit of many miles around Burgoyne's camp they plundered, and butchered, and scalped with entire indifference to the sex, the age, and the political opinions of their victims. Burke told the story of a poor Scotch girl's murder, on the eve of her intended marriage to an officer of the King's troops, with an effect on the nerves of his audience which perhaps was never equalled except by his own description, during the trial of Warren Hastings, of the treatment inflicted by the Nabob Vizier on the Oude princesses. Many of his hearers were moved to tears—a spectacle which, in the British Parliament, is seen hardly once in a generation; and Governor Johnstone congratulated the Ministry that there were no strangers in the Gallery, because they would have been worked up to such a pitch of excitement that Lord North, and Lord George Germaine, must have run a serious risk from popular violence as soon as they emerged into the street from the sanctuary of the House of Commons.

And then Burke changed his note, and convulsed his audience by a parody of Burgoyne's address to the Indians. It was a passage which Horace Walpole, who had collected his knowledge of it in detached morsels from many sources, pronounced to be a *chef-d'œuvre* of wit, humor, and just satire. "I wish," he wrote, "I could give an idea of that superlative oration. How cold, how inadequate will be my fragment of a sketch

from second, third, and thousandth hands!" Burke related how the British general harangued a throng of warriors drawn from seventeen separate Indian nations, who, so far from understanding the Burgoyne dialect, could not even follow the meaning of a speech made in plain English; how he invited them—by their reverence for the Christian religion, and their well-known, and well-considered, views on the right of taxation inherent in the Parliament at Westminster—to grasp their tomahawks, and rally round his Majesty's standard; and how he adjured them, "by the same divine and human laws," not to touch a hair on the head of man, woman, or child while living, though he was willing to deal with them for scalps of the dead, inasmuch as he was a nice and distinguished judge between the scalp taken from a dead person, and from the head of a person who had died of being scalped. "Let us illustrate this Christian exhortation, and Christian injunction," said Burke, "by a more familiar picture. Suppose the case of a riot on Tower Hill. What would the keeper of his Majesty's lions do? Would he not leave open the dens of the wild beasts and address them thus: 'My gentle lions, my humane bears, my tender-hearted hyenas, go forth against the seditious mob on your mission of repression and retribution; but I exhort you as you are Christians, and members of a civilized society, to take care not to hurt man, woman, or child.' " Burke, like Mr. Gladstone after him, was said to be deficient in humor; but a great orator depends for his lighter effects not on a store of prepared jests and epigrams, but

on the unforced gaiety by which he himself is swayed at the moment, and which he has the art and the power to diffuse among his hearers. The walls of the chamber fairly shook with applause; Lord North himself "was almost suffocated by laughter"; and Colonel Barré declared that, if Burke would only print the speech, he, on his part, would undertake that it should be nailed to the door of every parish church beneath the notice proclaiming a day of general fasting and humiliation on account of the surrender of Saratoga. That speech would explain, far better than the homily of any courtly bishop, the real causes of the disaster which had brought the nation to dust and ashes.

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. . . The reception accorded to Edmund Burke's exposition of his plan of Economical Reform was of a nature which left him nothing to desire. An immense crowd of members sat and stood, listening, and learning, and enjoying while he rolled out his vivid and picturesque, but most accurate and businesslike, catalogue of financial abuses, and while he descanted upon their intimate relation to the good fame and efficiency of Parliament. . . . After holding his audience during more than three hours he wound up what he had to say with a few unadorned sentences, pitched in a quiet strain; and, when Edmund Burke spoke calmly and simply under the stress of deep emotion, his words always possessed a strange and mysterious charm. The House remained spell-bound. Fox took off his hat to second the motion. North, embarrassed, and a great deal more than half-convinced, stated it



as his belief that no other gentleman could have been equal to the task so ably performed by the Honorable Member, "although he had the happiness to know that there were many then present who had very brilliant parts." . . . Burke approached the subject in a spirit of high comedy. He professed a desire to rescue a company of eminent writers from dry and irksome functions which distracted them from loftier studies, and more congenial labors. As an Academy of *Belles Lettres*, he said, he held them hallowed. As a Board of Trade he wished to abolish them. That Board, to his view, was a crow's nest in which nightingales were kept prisoners; and his design was to restore the nightingales to their liberty in the hope that they might sing the more delightfully. Aroused by the sympathy and applause of his audience, which has often inspired lesser men, Burke positively reveled in the freedom and license of committee. He spoke as often as he chose, and each successive apologist for the Board of Trade was overwhelmed by the exuberance of his diction and imagination, and the irresistible play of his satire. "I can never," so Gibbon confessed, "forget the delight with which that diffusive and ingenious orator was heard by all sides of the House, and even by those whose existence he proscribed. The Lords of Trade blushed at their own insignificance; and Mr. Eden's appeal to the thousand five hundred volumes of our reports served only to excite a general laugh." At a quarter past two in the morning the Committee at length divided, and voted for abolishing the Board by two hundred and seven as against a hundred and ninety-nine.

## V

SPEECH OF WILLIAM PITT, THE EARL OF  
CHATHAM

IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS, JANUARY 20, 1775, MOVING AN  
ADDRESS TO HIS MAJESTY FOR THE IMMEDIATE REMOVAL  
OF HIS TROOPS FROM BOSTON.

I congratulate your Lordships that the business is *at last* entered upon by the noble Lord's laying the papers before you. As I suppose your Lordships too well apprised of their contents, I hope I am not premature in submitting to you my present motion :

That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, humbly to desire and beseech his Majesty that in order to open the way towards a happy settlement of the dangerous troubles in America, by beginning to allay ferments and soften animosities there, and above all for preventing in the meantime any sudden and fatal catastrophe at Boston, now suffering under the daily irritation of an army before their eyes, posted in their town, it may graciously please his Majesty that immediate orders be despatched to General Gage for removing his Majesty's forces from the town of Boston as soon as the rigor of the season and other circumstances indispensable to the safety and accommodation of the said troops may render the same practicable.

I wish, my Lords, not to lose a day in this urgent, pressing crisis; an hour now lost in allaying ferments in America may produce years of calamity. For my own part, I will not desert, for a moment, the conduct of this weighty business, from the first to the last; unless nailed to my bed by the extremity of sickness, I will give it unremitted attention; I will knock at the door of this sleeping and confounded Ministry, and will rouse them to a sense of their important danger.

When I state the importance of the colonies to this country, and the magnitude of the danger hanging over this country, from the present plan of mis-administration practiced against them, I desire not to be understood to argue for a reciprocity of indulgence between England and America. I contend not for indulgence, but for justice to America; and I shall ever contend that the Americans justly owe obedience to us in a limited degree,—they owe obedience to our ordinances of trade and navigation. But let the line be skilfully drawn between the objects of those ordinances and their private, internal property; let the sacredness of their property remain inviolate; let it be taxable only by their own consent, given in their provincial assemblies, else *it will cease to be property*. As to the metaphysical refinements, attempting to show that the Americans are equally free from obedience and commercial restraints as from taxation for revenue, as being unrepresented here, I pronounce them futile, frivolous, and groundless.

When I urge this measure of recalling the troops from Boston, I urge it on this pressing principle, that

it is necessarily preparatory to the restoration of your peace, and the establishment of your prosperity. It will then appear that you are disposed to treat amicably and equitably, and to consider, revise, and repeal, if it should be found necessary, as I affirm it will, those violent acts and declarations which have disseminated confusion throughout your empire.

Resistance to your acts was necessary as it was just; and your vain declarations of the omnipotence of Parliament, and your imperious doctrines of the necessity of submission, will be found equally impotent to convince or to enslave your fellow-subjects in America, who feel that tyranny, whether ambitioned by an individual part of the legislature or the bodies who compose it, is equally intolerable to British subjects.

The means of enforcing this thralldom are found to be as ridiculous and weak in practice as they are unjust in principle. Indeed, I cannot but feel the most anxious sensibility for the situation of General Gage and the troops under his command; thinking him, as I do, a man of humanity and understanding; and entertaining, as I ever will, the highest respect, the warmest love, for the British troops. Their situation is truly unworthy, penned up pining in inglorious inactivity. They are an army of impotence. You may call them an army of safety and of guard; but they are in truth an army of impotence and contempt; and to make the folly equal to the disgrace, they are an army of irritation and vexation.

But I find a report *creeping* abroad that Ministers censure General Gage's inactivity: let *them* censure

him—it becomes them—it becomes their *justice* and their *honor*. I mean not to censure his inactivity: it is a prudent and necessary inaction. But what a miserable condition is that where disgrace is prudence and where it is necessary to be contemptible! This tameness, however contemptible, cannot be censured; for the first drop of blood shed in civil and unnatural war might be *immedicabile vulnus*.

I therefore urge and conjure your Lordships immediately to adopt this conciliating measure. I will pledge myself for its immediately producing conciliatory effects by its being thus well-timed; but if you delay till your vain hope shall be accomplished, of triumphantly dictating reconciliation, you delay forever. But, admitting that this hope, which in truth is desperate, should be accomplished, what do you gain by the imposition of your victorious amity? You will be untrusted and unthanked. Adopt, then, the grace, while you have the opportunity of reconciliation, or at least prepare the way. Allay the ferment prevailing in America by removing the obnoxious, hostile cause—obnoxious and unserviceable, for their merit can be only in inaction: *Non dimicare est vincere*—their victory can never be by exertions. Their force would be most disproportionately exerted against a brave, generous, and united people, with arms in their hands and courage in their hearts—three millions of people, the genuine descendants of a valiant and pious ancestry, driven to those deserts by the narrow maxims of a superstitious tyranny. And is the spirit of persecution never to be appeased? Are the brave sons



of those brave forefathers to inherit the sufferings, as they have inherited their virtues? Are they to sustain the infliction of the most oppressive and unexampled severity, beyond the accounts of history or description of poetry? *Rhadamanthus habet durissima regna, castigatque*, AUDITQUE. So says the wisest poet, and perhaps the wisest statesman and politician of antiquity. But our Ministers say, *the Americans must not be heard*. They have been condemned *unheard*; the discriminating hand of vengeance has lumped together innocent and guilty; with all the formalities of hostility has blocked up the town, and reduced to beggary and famine thirty thousand inhabitants.

But his Majesty is advised that the union in America cannot last! Ministers have more eyes than I, and should have more ears, but, with all the information I have been able to procure, I can pronounce it—an union solid, permanent, and effectual. Ministers may satisfy themselves, and delude the public, with the report of what they call commercial bodies in America. They are *not* commercial; they are your packers and factors: they live upon nothing—for I call commission nothing. I mean the Ministerial *authority* for this American intelligence; the runners for Government, who are paid for their intelligence. But these are not the men, nor this the influence, to be considered in America, when we estimate the firmness of their union: even to extend the question, and to take in the really mercantile circle, will be totally inadequate to the consideration. Trade, indeed, increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and

stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land. In their simplicity of life is found the simpleness of virtue—the integrity and courage of freedom. These true, genuine sons of the earth are invincible; and they surround and hem in the mercantile bodies; even if these bodies, which supposition I totally disclaim, could be supposed disaffected to the cause of liberty. Of this general spirit existing in the British *nation*—for so I wish to distinguish the real and genuine Americans from the pseudo-traders I have described—of this spirit of independence, animating the *nation* of America, I have the most authentic information. It is not new among them; it is, and has ever been, their established principle, their confirmed persuasion; it is their nature and their doctrine.

I remember, some years ago, when the repeal of the Stamp Act was in agitation, conversing in a friendly confidence with a person of undoubted respect and authenticity, on that subject; and he assured me, with a certainty which his judgment and opportunity gave him, that these were the prevalent and steady principles of America—that you might destroy their towns, and cut them off from the superfluities, and perhaps the conveniences, of life; but that they were prepared to despise your power, and would not lament their loss, whilst they had—what, my Lords?—their woods and their liberty. The name of my authority, if I am called upon, will authenticate the opinion irrefragably.

If illegal violences have been, as it is said, committed in America, prepare the way—open the door of pos-

sibility for acknowledgment and satisfaction; but proceed not to such coercion, such proscription; cease your indiscriminate inflictions; amerce not thirty thousand; oppress not three millions, for the fault of forty or fifty. Such severity of injustice must forever render incurable the wounds you have already given your colonies. You irritate them to unappeasable rancor. What though you march from town to town and from province to province; though you should be able to enforce a temporary and local submission—which I only suppose, not admit—how shall you be able to secure the obedience of the country you leave behind you in your progress, to grasp the dominion of eighteen hundred miles of continent, populous in numbers, possessing valor, liberty, and resistance?

This resistance to your arbitrary system of taxation might have been foreseen. It was obvious, from the nature of things and of mankind; and, above all, from the Whiggish spirit flourishing in that country. The spirit which now resists your taxation in America is the same which formerly opposed loans, benevolences, and ship-money in England—the same spirit which called all England *on its legs*, and by the Bill of Rights vindicated the English constitution; the same spirit which established the great, fundamental, essential maxim of your liberties, *that no subject of England shall be taxed but by his own consent*.

This glorious spirit of Whiggism animates three millions in America, who prefer poverty with liberty to gilded chains and sordid affluence; and who will die in defense of their rights as men, as freemen. What

shall oppose this spirit, aided by the congenial flame glowing in the breasts of every Whig in England, to the amount, I hope, of double the American numbers? Ireland they have to a man. In that country, joined as it is with the cause of the colonies, and placed at their head, the distinction I contend for is and must be observed. This country superintends and controls their trade and navigation; but they *tax themselves*. And this distinction between external and internal control is sacred and insurmountable; it is involved in the abstract nature of things. Property is private, individual, absolute. Trade is an extended and complicated consideration. It reaches as far as ships can sail or winds can blow; it is a great and various machine. To regulate the numberless movements of its several parts, and combine them into effect, for the good of the whole, requires the superintending wisdom and energy of the supreme power in the empire. But this supreme power has no effect towards internal taxation; for it does not exist in that relation. There is no such thing, *no such idea in this constitution, as a supreme power operating upon property*. Let this distinction then remain forever ascertained; taxation is theirs, commercial regulation is ours. As an American, I would recognize to England her supreme right of regulating commerce and navigation; as an Englishman by birth and principle, I recognize to the Americans their supreme unalienable right in their property, a right in which they are justified in the defense of to the last extremity. To maintain this principle is the common cause of the Whigs on the other side of the

Atlantic and on this. “ ’Tis liberty to liberty engaged,” that they will defend themselves, their families, and their country. In this great cause they are immovably allied. It is the alliance of God and nature — immutable, eternal — fixed as the firmament of heaven.

To such united force, what force shall be opposed? What, my Lords? A few regiments in America, and seventeen or eighteen thousand men at home. The idea is too ridiculous to take up a moment of your Lordships’ time. Nor can such a national and principled union be resisted by the tricks of office, of ministerial maneuver. Laying of papers on your table, or counting numbers on a division, will not avert or postpone the hour of danger; it must arrive, my Lords, unless these fatal acts are done away; it must arrive in all its horrors, and then these boastful Ministers, spite of all their confidence and all their maneuvers, shall be forced to hide their heads. They shall be forced to a disgraceful abandonment of their present measures and principles—principles which they avow, but cannot defend; measure which they presume to attempt, but cannot hope to effectuate. They cannot, my Lords, they cannot stir a step; they have not a *move* left; they are *checkmated*.

But it is not repealing this or that act of Parliament, it is not repealing a *piece of parchment*, that can restore America to our bosom. You must repeal her fears and her resentments; and you may then hope for her love and gratitude. But now, insulted with an armed force posted at Boston, irritated with an



hostile array before her eyes, her concessions, if you *could* force them, would be suspicious and insecure; they will be *irato animo*; they will not be the sound, honorable pactions of freemen; they will be the dictates of fear, and the extortions of force. But it is more than evident that you cannot force them, principled and united as they are, to your unworthy terms of submission; it is impossible: and, when I hear General Gage censured for inactivity, I must retort with indignation on those whose intemperate measures and improvident counsels have betrayed him into his present situation. His situation reminds me, my Lords, of the answer of a French General in the Civil Wars of France; Monsieur Condé, opposed to Monsieur Turenne, was asked how it happened that he did not take his adversary prisoner, as he was often very near him; "J'ai peur," replied Condé, very honestly, "j'ai peur qu'il ne me prenne,"—*I'm afraid he'll take me.*

When your Lordships look at the papers transmitted to us from America, when you consider their decency, firmness, and wisdom, you cannot but respect their cause, and wish to make it your own. For myself, I must declare and avow that in all my reading and observation—and it has been my favorite study; I have read Thucydides, and have studied and admired the master-states of the world—that for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion, under such a complication of difficult circumstances, no nation, or body of men, can stand in preference to the General Congress of Philadelphia. I trust it is obvious to your Lordships that all attempts to impose

servitude upon such men, to establish despotism over such a mighty continental *nation*, must be vain, must be fatal. We shall be *forced ultimately to retract*; let us retract while we can, not when we must. I say we must necessarily undo these violent oppressive acts; they must be repealed. You will repeal them; I pledge myself for it, that you will in the end repeal them; I stake my reputation on it. I will consent to be taken for an idiot if they are not finally repealed. Avoid, then, this humiliating, this disgraceful necessity. With the dignity becoming your exalted situation make the first advances to concord, to peace, and to happiness; for that is your true dignity, to act with prudence and justice. That you should first concede is obvious, from sound and rational policy. Concession comes with better grace and more salutary effect from the superior power; it reconciles superiority of power with the feelings of men; and establishes solid confidence on the foundations of affection and gratitude.

So thought a wise poet and a wise man in political sagacity; the friend of Mæcenas, and the eulogist of Augustus. To him, the adopted son and successor of the first Cæsar; to him, the master of the world, he wisely urged this conduct of prudence and dignity:

Tuque prior, tu parces; genus qui ducis Olympo;  
Projice tela manu.

Every motive, therefore, of justice and of policy, of dignity and of prudence, urges you to allay the ferment in America—by a removal of your troops from

Boston, by a repeal of your acts of Parliament, and by demonstration of amicable dispositions towards your colonies. On the other hand, every danger and every hazard impend, to deter you from perseverance in your present ruinous measures—foreign war hanging over your heads by a slight and brittle thread, France and Spain watching your conduct, and waiting for the maturity of your errors, with a vigilant eye to America, and the temper of your colonies, more than to their own concerns, be they what they may.

To conclude, my Lords: if the Ministers thus persevere in misadvising and misleading the King, I will not say that they can alienate the affections of his subjects from his crown; but I will affirm *that they will make the crown not worth his wearing*. I will not say that the King is betrayed; but I will pronounce *that the kingdom is undone*.

FROM SPEECH OF PITT, NOV. 1777

I love and honor the British troops; I know their virtue and their valor; I know they can achieve anything except impossibilities. And the conquest of English America *is an impossibility*. You cannot—I venture to say it—you *cannot* conquer America. . . . You may swell every expense and every effort still more extravagantly, pile and accumulate every assistance you can buy or barter, traffic and barter with every little pitiful German Prince that sells and sends his subjects to the shambles of a foreign country—your efforts are forever vain and impotent. Doubly so

from this mercenary aid on which you rely; for it irritates, to an incurable resentment, the minds of your enemies—to over-run them with the sordid sons of rapine and plunder, devoting them and their possessions to the rapacity of hireling cruelty! If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country I would never lay down my arms, never! never! never!

## VI

### EXCERPTS FROM THE SPEECHES OF CHARLES JAMES FOX

[The Ministers tried every expedient to divert Fox from his purpose. Welbore Ellis was put up to cajole and entreat, and Thurlow to bully; but Fox replied that no power on earth should induce him to withdraw his motion. "He was satisfied" (so the report runs) "that the House would never consent to their own degradation and disgrace in the person of their Speaker, nor would contradict on a Friday what they had approved on the Wednesday immediately preceding. It had been said that the speech was not grammar. If the speech was not grammar, it abounded in good sense, and conveyed the true, unbiased sense of the House, and of every man on either side who had not been bought over to a sacrifice of his principles and his conscience." The fire and sincerity of the young orator swept the air clear, and aroused cordial enthusiasm in the virtuous and the honest, and a touch of penitence in some who had dallied with corruption. Rigby himself was cowed, and grumbled out the semblance of an apology; Fox saw his Resolution passed without a division; and then, on the motion of an independent member, the thanks of the House were specifically and unanimously voted to Mr. Speaker for his speech



to His Majesty. That was the first defeat inflicted upon the Court in the memorable series of parliamentary campaigns which was now opening.<sup>1</sup>]

FROM SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT, FEBRUARY 2, 1778

. . . There was another circumstance, which tended to mislead the House, and for which the Ministers and not the House were entirely to blame, and that was the partial manner in which they laid papers before the House; they laid the accounts of facts, but no opinions of people upon the spot as to the extent of the resistance, the temper of the people, or any other circumstance concerning it.

Now, Sir, if men are endued with passions, if they are not mere machines, the knowledge of facts is nothing, unless it is accompanied with the springs and motives from whence such motives proceeded. Suppose, for instance, a person in a distant country had no other way of judging of the temper of this House and of the motives of their conduct, but from our printed votes; could such a man form any judgment of the reasons why such a line of conduct was approved, and why such a one was rejected? Sir, it would be ridiculous in the extreme to suppose it. Now, Sir, I will venture to affirm, that this House was not, in the year 1775, informed of the spirit of opposition there was in America, and of their prejudices against taxation. If they had, I should hope they would have thought it wise, if not just, to have applied such remedies as

<sup>1</sup>Described by G. O. Trevelyan in *George Third and Charles Fox*.

might have healed rather than irritated the distemper. But instead of anything of this sort, other bills were immediately passed, showing that all was of a hostile nature, and that nothing was to be expected of this country but coercion and punishment. . . .

. . . It appears to me, that if gentlemen are not blind, they will see that war is impracticable, and that no good can come from force only. . . . Every blow you strike in America is against yourselves, even though you should be able, which you never will be, to force them to submit.

FROM SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT, NOVEMBER 26, 1778

The war of the Americans is a war of passion. It is of such a nature as to be supported by the most powerful virtues, love of liberty and of country, and at the same time by those passions in the human heart which give strength, perserverance, and courage to man; the spirit of revenge for the injuries you have done them, of retaliation for the hardships inflicted on them, and of opposition to the unjust powers you would have exercised over them. Everything combines to animate them to this war, and such a war is without end; for whatever obstinacy enthusiasm ever inspired man with, you will now have to contend with in America: no matter what gives birth to that enthusiasm, whether the name of religion or of liberty, the effects are the same; it inspires a spirit that is unconquerable, and solicitous to undergo difficulties and dangers; and as long as there is a man in America, so long will you have him against you in the field.

## FROM SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT, NOVEMBER 6, 1779

Gentlemen had praised the efforts which this country had made in the course of the war, and had argued well from that circumstance, declaring that we had astonished all Europe by our exertions. It was most true. The war was begun madly, the Ministers had made war blindfold, and the efforts of this country so directed, and so planned, like the efforts of a madman, which were always more powerful than those of a reasonable being, had astonished all Europe. But what good had they done? They had only weakened and reduced our resources. They had exhausted the spirit of the people, and had almost annihilated the power of future exertion. An honorable gentleman had said it was improper to term the war unjust, excepting only within these walls; he must beg leave to differ with him in opinion. He thought the war unjust, he had said so repeatedly in that House, he had said so elsewhere, and he would say so whenever and wherever he had the opportunity. He would say so to the whole world, if his voice had power and extent enough to communicate the idea. But according to the argument of the honorable gentleman to whom he was alluding, what was unjust in its origin became just in its advancement and prosecution. The honorable gentleman thought he had got justice on his side, that he had got all. Did the honorable gentleman think that the Americans, once driven by our injustice to assert their independency, ought, in justice, to relinquish that independency, and to alter their established government,

and rely on our word for the performance of our promises? . . .

. . . But a right honorable gentleman had asked, would gentlemen refuse to thank Lord Cornwallis and his officers for their extraordinary gallantry at Camden? In answer to that question he, for one, made no scruple to declare that he most certainly would. He would not thank his own brother, who was now serving in America, for any success he might obtain. As long as he lived, he never would join in a vote of thanks to any officer whose laurels were gathered in the American war; and his reason was that he hated and detested the war; he regarded it as the fountain-head of all the mischief and all the calamities which this miserable country labored under at this moment.

#### FROM SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT, MAY 30, 1781

The ministers found it necessary to protract the war, to avoid every tendency to pacification, because they knew the war was necessary to their continuance in power and place. They sacrificed honor and duty; they sacrificed the interests and, perhaps, the existence of their country to the temporary gratification of their avarice and their ambition, in the enjoyment of the places and honors which they now held, and which were so connected and interwoven with the American war as to depend on its existence. The minister, then, knowing this fact, knowing that he lived, and must die, with the American war had encountered shame and embraced it, in order to its continuance. He had been forced into all those vile meas-

ures of contradiction and absurdity which had brought infamy on the present age, and would bring ruin on posterity. There was no accounting for the credulity, the servility, and the meanness of Parliament, in either believing or submitting to receive all the monstrous and incredible stories which they had been told by the minister, in any other way than by referring to the means which influence possessed; the emoluments of contracts and the profits of a loan. It had, no doubt, been the study of the minister to tell his friends that their payment, like his own bread, depended on the American war. . . .

With members of Parliament the noble lord held a language that was as easily to be guessed at . . . supposing that any remonstrance should be made on that score, what would the noble lord say? "Why, you know that this war is a matter of necessity, and not of choice: you see the difficulties to which I am driven, and to which I have reduced my country; and you know also that in my own private character I am a lover of peace. For what reasons, then, do I persist in spite of conviction? For your benefit alone! For you I have violated the most sacred engagements! for you rejected the suggestions of conscience and reason! for you a thousand times forfeited my honor and veracity in this business, and for you I must still persist! Without the American war I shall have no places, no emoluments to bestow: not a single loan to negotiate, nor shall I even be able to retain this poor situation of mine that I have thus long held thus disinterestedly. You see me now in the most



elevated situation, with the disposal of pensions and places, and with the whole of the nation in my hands; but make peace with America today, and tomorrow I shall be reduced to the level of private life, retaining nothing but what is merely personal of all my present advantages. If you do not vote with me," continues the noble lord, "against a peace with America, how am I to give you anything? It is true that my position as minister is a respectable and elevated situation, but it is the American war that enables me to give you douceurs, and to put into your pockets eight or nine hundred thousands pounds by a loan. Put an end to that and you undo all. My power will be miserably lessened, and your pay as miserably reduced. As to myself, why, I am perfectly indifferent about that; I get a little, and it is my happiness that a little, thank Heaven, contents me. I therefore cannot be supposed to care if a peace takes place with America tomorrow, so far as I am personally concerned; but for your own sakes do not let such things come to pass. Nay, were I to go out of office—a situation I never courted, always disliked, and heartily wished to be rid of—still I hope the American war would be continued." Such pathetic reasoning could not fail to have its effect. Thus it was the noble lord induced members of that House to sacrifice the interests of their constituents, by proving that their own interests were essentially connected with the prosecution of the war. Was it possible, therefore, that peace with America could ever be obtained but by a renunciation of that system which the present ministry had with so

much obstinacy adhered to? And here was another obstacle arising from the noble lord's feelings. "O spare my beautiful system!" he would cry; "what! shall I part with that! with that which has been the glory of the present reign, which has extended the dominions, raised the reputation, and replenished the finances of my country! No, for God's sake, let this be adhered to, and do with all the rest what you please; deprive me, if you please, of this poor situation; take all my power, all my honor and consequence, but spare my beautiful system, O, spare my system!"

FROM SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT, NOVEMBER 27, 1781

. . . It was his opinion that the day was now approaching, that it was at hand, when the public would no longer submit, nor the Ministry escape. Their conduct was unprecedented in any age or in any history; it beggared the records of nations: for in all the annals of kingdoms ruined by weakness or by treachery there was not an instance so glaring as the present of a country ruined by a set of men without the confidence, the love, or the opinion of the people, and who yet remained secure amidst the storms of public disaster. The honorable gentleman who had seconded the motion had called for unanimity. He demanded to know if they meant to insult that side of the House when they had opposed it from its commencement; they had opposed it in all its progress; they had warned, supplicated, and threatened; they had predicted every event, and in no one instance had they failed in predicting the fatal consequences that had ensued from their ob-

stinacy or from their treason. If, in a moment like the present, a moment of impending ruin, men who loved their country could have any comfort, he confessed he must feel it as a comfort and consolation that when the history of this dreadful period should come to be written by a candid and impartial hand, he must proclaim to posterity that the friends with whom he had the honor to act were not to be charged with the calamities of the system. In justice to them he must declare that they did all that men could do to avert the evils, to direct them to a more safe and honorable track; but they had failed in their anxious endeavors to save their country. This much at least the historian would say, and thus would they be exempted from sharing the condemnation, though they now suffered the calamity, in common with the rest of their unhappy fellow-subjects. . . .

. . . The ministers commenced war against America after that country had offered the fairest propositions, and extended her arms to receive us into the closest and nearest connection. They did this contrary to their own sentiments of what was right; but they were overruled by that high and secret authority which they durst not disobey, and from which they derive their situations. They were ordered to go on with the American war or quit their places. They preferred emolument to duty, and kept their ostensible power at the expense of their country.

## VII

### EXCERPTS FROM SPEECHES AS RECORDED IN THE PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY FOR 1775-1776

GOVERNOR GEORGE JOHNSTONE

If we fail in the attempt, which is the happiest event that can occur, what difficulties may not disgust, irritation, and all the horrors of civil war, engender? (Feb. 6, 1775.)

But respecting general opinion, I still go further; I maintain that the sense of the best and wisest men in this country, are on the side of the Americans. (Oct. 26, 1775.)

J. JOHNSTONE

Mr. J. Johnstone said that however unacquainted he might be with parliamentary proceedings, he had observed, since the commencement of the present session, it was expected by the friends of administration, that no proposition of theirs, however wild, extravagance, or novel, should be questioned. This to him was a most extraordinary procedure, nor could he see to what end Parliament assembled, if they only assembled to vote, not to deliberate. (Nov. 13, 1775.)

SIR GEORGE SAVILE

That if rebellion was resistance to government, he could not consider all rebellions to be alike—there must

be such a thing as justifiable rebellion—and submitted to the House, whether a people taxed without their consent, and their petitions against such taxation rejected; their characters taken away without hearing; and an army let loose upon them without a possibility of obtaining justice—whether a people under such circumstances could not be said to be in justifiable rebellion? (Feb. 10, 1775.)

TEMPLE LUTTRELL

Sir, the far more considerable part of the people of England do now wish us to use temper, moderation, and forbearance towards America. (Feb. 13, 1775.)

The military coercion of America will be impracticable. What has been the fate of your famous Bills passed in the last session of the deceased Parliament? I mean, Sir, the Boston Port Bill, and the Bill for altering the charter of Massachusetts Bay. America, as an earnest of her triumph over the future labors for which envy and malice may reserve her, has, like another Hercules in the cradle, already grappled with those two serpents sent for her destruction. Neither shall we be long able to sustain the unhallowed war at so remote a distance—unexplored deserts, woodland ambuscades, latitudes to which few of our soldiery have been seasoned—the southern provinces scarce to be endured in the summer months, the northern provinces not approachable in the winter season—shipwrecks, pestilence, famine. The unrelenting inveter-



acy and carnage of York and Lancaster will here be joined to all the elementary hardships and maladies of a bigot crusade. Shall not such dreadful eras in our earlier chronicle serve us for beacons at this perilous crisis? Those rash expeditions, indeed, undertaken by a few martial zealots on misconceived piety, began to decline at the death of the hot-brained, savage-hearted king, under whom they were first enterprized; and the sluices of kindred blood, which had long inundated the land in the red and white roses, were at length happily put a stop to, by a single matrimonial contract. Now, Sir, who can look forward to a probable epoch in the red volume of time when the sword drawn in this quarrel shall be sheathed in peace! I can see no end, till slaughter, proscription, extirpation, shall totally have annihilated either one or the other people. (Feb. 27, 1775.)

Sir, the noble lord who spoke last, and the right honorable member who preceded him, have assured you that the sense of this country is against the Americans. I am confident, as well from the intelligence I have been able to procure from a multitude of persons widely differing in station and description, as by my own remarks in the progress of many a journey through the interior of this island during the summer season, that the sense of the mass of the people is in favor of the Americans. (Oct. 26, 1775.)

Certain I am, that the only fabricators of the American war are in this island; they are in this metropolis; they are most of them in this House. (Nov. 27, 1775.)

DAVID HARTLEY (WHO WAS A FRIEND OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, AND WITH HIM DREW UP THE TREATY OF PEACE THAT ENDED THE REVOLUTION)

When the debates and measures of this year are transmitted to America, they may, perhaps, tell the noble lord: "Had you pursued a plan of equity and justice, all had been peace." At home, one plan of conciliation has already been proposed, for which the city of London, foreseeing the certain ruin of other measures, has given thanks to its great and noble author, as an earnest for the rest of the kingdom. If Great Britain and America should come to one mind of peace, they may unite to crush those men who keep them asunder. (March 27, 1775.)

. . . . to perform the last ceremonial office of affection and everlasting farewell to peace and to America. The fate of America is cast. You may bruise its heel, but you cannot crush its head. It will revive again. The new world is before them. Liberty is theirs. They have possession of a free government, their birthright and inheritance, derived to them from their parent state, which the hand of violence cannot wrest from them. If you will cast them off, my last wish is to them; may they go and prosper. (Dec. 21, 1775.)

What confidence can we then have in ministers who are so grossly ignorant and deceived, or who conceal the true state of things from this House and the public, perhaps with no better view than to trepan them insidiously; and by gradual steps, into the support of

their own desperate and sanguinary designs? (Feb. 29, 1776.)

. . . . The most profound secrecy and concealment have been practiced to keep alarming truths from the public eye, and false preferences have been thrown out to amuse the credulous confidence of this House. It is not many months ago (no longer than the last session) that any member who got up to warn you of the fatal consequence of the war then recommended against America was laughed at in his place; the very suggestion was treated as being so ridiculous that the minister proposed to you to begin by disarming; by voting 4,000 seamen less than you had kept the year before; and not many days after the meeting of the new Parliament a vote of 3s. land-tax was proposed, with a view to soothe the landed men into the adoption of this fatal war. That this step was taken with no other view than to quiet the alarms of the landed interest is past dispute, because the vote for the 3s. land-tax was passed before Christmas, though the Bill was not brought in till after the holidays; the vote therefore was studiously thrown out beforehand, to prevent the discontents that might happen, and to mislead the public into a fallacious dependence, that a few unimportant discontents in America, as they were then represented to be, would soon be subdued. Where are we now? Have not our forebodings been more than realized? Has it been arrant folly in administration, to plunge us into our present situation? or, has it been downright treachery aforethought, to lead their unsuspecting country, step by step, into an irreconcilable

civil war, to dip Great Britain and America in blood, and to cut off the retreat to peace and safety? (April 1, 1776.)

CHARLES JAMES FOX

Mr. Fox said the noble Lord from the beginning had taken care to lead the House blindfold; and would, he was certain, continue to do so, till he found some personal convenience in acting otherwise.

The fact was the very reverse, as his lordship had been both the framer and approver; and by the arts of misinformation on one hand, and want of any material information on the other, Parliament were persuaded into an approbation of his measures. (March 8, 1775.)

THE MARQUIS OF GRANBY

In God's name, what language are you now holding out to America? Resign your property, divest yourselves of your privileges and freedom, renounce everything that can make life comfortable, or we will destroy your commerce, we will involve your country in all the miseries of famine; and if you express the sensations of men at such harsh treatment, we will then declare you in a state of rebellion, and put yourselves and your families, to fire and sword. And yet, Sir, the noble lord on the floor, has just told this House, that a reconciliation is the sole object of his wishes. I hope the noble lord will pardon me if I doubt the perfect sincerity of those wishes; at least, Sir, his actions justify my doubts; for every circumstance in his whole conduct, with regard to America,

has directly militated against his present professions : and what, Sir, must the Americans conclude? Whilst you are ravaging their coasts, and extirpating their commerce, and are withheld only by your impotence from spreading fresh ruin by the sword, can they, Sir, suppose such chastisement is intended to promote a reconciliation, and that you mean to restore to their forlorn country those liberties you deny to their present possession ; and in the insolence of persecution, are compassing earth and seas to destroy? You can with no more justice compel the Americans to your obedience by the operation of the present measure, by making use of their necessities and withholding from them that commerce on which their existence depends than a ruffian can found an equitable claim to my possessions, when he forcibly enters my house, and with a dagger at my throat, or a pistol at my breast, makes me seal deeds which will convey to him my estate and property. (April 5, 1775.)

I have a very clear, a very adequate idea of rebellion, at least according to my own principles ; and those are the principles on which the Revolution was founded. It is not against whom a war is directed, but it is the justice of that war that does, or does not, constitute rebellion. If the innocent part of mankind must tamely relinquish their freedom, their property, and everything they hold dear, merely to avoid the imputation of rebellion, I beg, Sir, it may be considered, what kind of peace and loyalty there will then exist in the world, which consists only in violence and rapine, and is merely to be maintained for the benefit



of robbers and oppressors. I hope, Sir, I shall be believed when I assure you that I am as warm a friend to the interests of my country as any man in this House; but then it must be understood when those interests are founded in justice. I am not attached to any particular acre of land; the farmer in Cumberland or Durham is as little connected with me as the peasant in America: it is not the ground a man stands on that attaches me to him; it is not the air he breathes that connects me with him, but it is the principles of that man, those independent, those generous principles of liberty which he professes, co-operating with my own, which call me forth as his advocate, and make me glory in being considered his friend. (April 5, 1775.)

#### THE EARL OF EFFINGHAM

Ever since I was of an age to have any ambition at all, my highest has been to serve my country in a military capacity. If there was on earth an event I dreaded, it was to see this country so situated as to make that profession incompatible with my duty as a citizen. That period is, in my opinion, arrived; and I have thought myself bound to relinquish the hopes I had formed, by a resignation which appeared to me the only method of avoiding the guilt of enslaving my country, and embruing my hands in the blood of her sons. When the duties of a soldier and a citizen become inconsistent, I shall always think myself obliged to sink the character of the soldier in that of the citizen, till such time as those duties shall again, by the malice of our real enemies, become united. It is no

small sacrifice which a man makes who gives up his profession; but it is a much greater when a predilection, strengthened by habit, has given him so strong an attachment to his profession as I feel. I have, however, this one consolation, that by making that sacrifice I at least give to my country an unequivocal proof of the sincerity of my principles. (May 18, 1775.)

The Earl of Effingham observed on the scarcity of recruits, that from his own knowledge there was a backwardness prevailed amongst the people to enlist in those regiments destined for America. The fact being admitted, the real disposition of the people was at once apparent, and the prevalent inclination of the mass of the people was a certain criterion, which should determine the conduct of ministers. (Nov. 10, 1775.)

#### THE MARQUIS OF ROCKINGHAM

The Marquis of Rockingham, after enumerating the conduct of the several administrations for some years past respecting America, condemned the speech, which he called the speech of the minister, in very pointed terms; and contended that the measures recommended from the throne were big with the most portentous and ruinous consequences. (Oct. 26, 1775.)

#### THE EARL OF SHELBURNE

My lords, the ministers lament, that it is their task, in this American business, to support the measure of another administration. This is some acknowledgment, at least, that the measure was wrong. Why, then, did they support it? What secret influence has

compelled them to heap errors on errors, grievance upon grievance, till they have shaken the constitution to its foundation, and brought the whole empire into danger and confusion? The Americans judge from facts. They have seen a uniform lurking spirit of despotism pervade every administration. It has prevailed over the wisest and most constitutional counsels; it has precipitated us into the most pernicious of all wars; a war with our brothers, our friends, and our fellow subjects. It was this lurking spirit of despotism that produced the Stamp Act in 1765; that fettered the repeal of that Act in 1766; that revived the principles of it in 1767. (Oct. 26, 1775.)

THE LORD MAYOR OF LONDON, MR. WILKES

I call the war with our brethern in America an unjust, felonious war . . . I assert, Sir, that it is in consequence a murderous war, because it is an effort to deprive men of their lives for standing up in the just cause of the defense of their property, and their clear rights. It becomes no less a murderous war, with respect to many of our fellow subjects of this island; for every man, either of the navy or army, who has been sent by government to America, and fallen a victim in this unnatural and unjust contest, has, in my opinion, been murdered by administration, and his blood lies at their door. Such a war, I fear, Sir, will draw down the vengeance of Heaven upon this devoted kingdom. (Oct. 26, 1775.)

I speak, Sir, as a firm friend to England and America, but still more to universal liberty, and the rights

of all mankind. I trust no part of the subjects of this vast empire will ever submit to be slaves. I am sure the Americans are too high-spirited to brook the idea. Your whole power and that of your allies, if you add any, even of all the German troops, of all the ruffians from the north whom you can hire, cannot effect so wicked a purpose. (Oct. 26, 1775.)

GENERAL CONWAY

He condemned that war as cruel, unnecessary, and unnatural; called it a butchery of his fellow subjects, to which his conscience forbade him to give his assent. (Oct. 26, 1775.)

SERGEANT ADAIR

I am against the present war, Sir, because I think it unjust in its commencement, injurious to both countries in its prosecution, and ruinous in its event. . . .

This doubtful and unprofitable right has been attempted to be asserted and enforced by a series of laws, the most oppressive, the most violent, the most arbitrary, unjust and tyrannical, that ever disgraced the annals of any civilized nation upon earth. . . .

Thinking them, as I now do, from the bottom of my soul, engaged in a noble and glorious struggle . . . . (Oct. 27, 1775.)

GEORGE DEMPSTER

. . . . That in my conscience I think the claim of the Americans is just and well-founded. (Oct. 27, 1775.)

## SIR JOSEPH MAWBEY

Sir Joseph Mawbey said the American war was unnecessary and wanton ; and it was difficult to determine whether it was most founded in folly or injustice. (Nov. 13, 1775.)

## THE DUKE OF GRAFTON

He explained the reasons upon which his motion was founded ; and said, he thought such a motion extremely necessary at this time, when not only the nation at large was kept in such profound ignorance, but even the ancient hereditary council, his Majesty's great constitutional advisers, knew no more of what measures were intended to be pursued than they did of what was transacting in any foreign cabinet in Europe. (Nov. 15, 1775.)

## LORD CAMDEN

Peace is still within our power ; nay, we may command it. A suspension of arms on our part, if adopted in time, will secure it for us ; and I may add, on our own terms. From which it is plain, as we have been the original aggressors in this business, if we obstinately persist, we are fairly answerable for all the consequences. I again repeat, what I often urged before, that I was against this unnatural war from the beginning. I was equally against every measure from the instant the first tax was proposed to this minute. When, therefore, it is insisted, that we aim only to defend and enforce our own rights, I positively



deny it. I contend, that America has been driven, by cruel necessity, to defend her rights from the united attacks of violence, oppression, and injustice. I contend that America has been indisputably aggrieved. Perhaps, as a domineering Englishman, wishing to enjoy the ideal benefit of such a claim, I might urge it with earnestness, and endeavor to carry my point; but if, on the other hand, I resided in America, that I felt or was to feel the effects of such manifest injustice, I certainly should resist the attempt with that degree of ardor so daring a violation of what should be held dearer than life itself ought to enkindle in the breast of every freeman. Here, my lords, I speak as an American, or as one residing in America, who, finding himself deprived of his liberty and his property attacked, would resist and with all his might repel the aggressor. (Nov. 15, 1775.)

## LORD HOWE

Lord Howe did not know any struggle an officer could have, serving on the present occasion, so painful as that between his duty as an officer and his duty as a man. However he suffered, if commanded, his decided duty was to serve. He did apprehend that all this an honorable relation of his had felt; it was what he himself felt very sensibly; and if it were left to his choice, he certainly should decline to serve. (Nov. 20, 1775.)

## THE DUKE OF RICHMOND

On the whole, my lords, I pronounce this Bill to be fraught with all possible injustice and cruelty. I do

not think the people of America in rebellion, but resisting acts of the most unexampled cruelty and oppression. (Dec. 15, 1775.)

For instance, I say the present Bill is cruel, oppressive, and tyrannic. I contend that the resistance made by the colonists is in consequence of other acts, equally oppressive, cruel, and tyrannic; and thus I prove that this resistance is not rebellion, but that the Americans are resisting acts of violence and injustice; consequently, that such a resistance is neither treason nor rebellion; but is perfectly justifiable in every possible political and moral sense. (Dec. 15, 1775.)

#### JOHN DUNNING

Mr. Dunning said that, whatever doubts prevailed on the first day of the session, whether the speech from the throne predicted war or peace, no one could now be at a loss to know its genuine import. He was one who looked upon it, from the very beginning, to be a formal declaration of war against all America. He was every day more and more satisfied that his suspicions were well-founded; but now he has nothing to prevent him from pronouncing with certainty that he was fully justified in his opinion that war, and a war of the most unrelenting and bloody complection, was meant to be made on those devoted people. (Dec. 1, 1775.)

#### MR. CRUGER

If their claims of exemption from parliamentary taxation are founded in equity and the principles of the constitution; if they have been driven by a wanton,

cruel, and impolitic attack on their privileges to their present desperate defense, then the whole guilt and censure is chargeable on those, and those alone, whose ambition and ill-directed measures have forced them to these extremities. (Feb. 20, 1776.)

## COL. BARRE

But in a serious manner he charged the gentlemen opposite to him with the loss of America. With an emphasis he said, Give us back our colonies! You have lost America! It is your ignorance, blunders, cowardice, which have lost America. He had heard the noble lord (George Germain) called "the Pitt of the day." He saw no great sense in the words. They conveyed to him that there had been a Mr. Pitt, a great man, but he did not see how the noble lord was like him. He said that the troops, from an aversion to the service, misbehaved at Bunker's Hill on the 17th of June. He condemned administration in the strongest terms, and told them that their shiftings and evasions would not protect them, though they should be changed every day, and made to shift places at the pleasure, and sometimes too for the sport of their secret directors. He observed that the late appointment of a new secretary of state was a proof that some weak, and perhaps foul, proceedings had happened, which made such an arrangement necessary; but though changes might happen every day, he was well convinced measures never would, till the whole fabric of despotism fell at once, and buried in its ruins the architects, with all those employed under them. He reminded the House how often, in the

course of the two last years, he had foretold almost every matter that had happened. He begged once more to assure them that America would never submit to be taxed, though half Germany were to be transported beyond the Atlantic, to effect it. (Feb. 20, 1776.)

FREDERICK STUART

This I do say for the Americans, because I do believe it, that had their real motives been fairly and impartially laid before this House, and the Parliament of Great Britain been called in as the mediators, not the persecutors of the people, all would have ended well; that good faith which had been wantonly violated towards the colonies would have been restored upon a more lasting foundation, and men's lives and properties been safe at this very hour. (Feb. 29, 1776.)

EARL TEMPLE

From these and other causes, together with the imbecility of administration, this country is reduced into a situation so deplorable that the wisest man in the kingdom can propose nothing that promises an honorable issue. I feel that I speak in fetters. (March 5, 1776.)

PROTEST SIGNED BY SIXTEEN MEMBERS OF COMMONS

Because the attempt to coerce by famine the whole body of the inhabitants of great and populous provinces is without example in the history of this, or

perhaps of any civilized nation; and is one of those unhappy inventions to which Parliament is driven by the difficulties which daily multiply upon us, from an obstinate adherence to an unwise plan of government. . . . That government which attempts to preserve its authority by destroying the trade of its subjects, and by involving the innocent and guilty in a common ruin, if it acts from a choice of such means, confesses itself unworthy; if from inability to find any other, admits itself wholly incompetent to the ends of its institution. (March 21, 1775.)

#### PROTEST SIGNED BY NINETEEN MEMBERS

We have, on the other hand, beheld so large a part of the empire, united in one common cause, really sacrificing with cheerfulness their lives and fortunes, and preferring all the horrors of a war raging in the very heart of their country to ignominious ease. We have beheld this part of his Majesty's subjects, thus irritated by resistance, and so successful in it, still making professions in which we think it neither wise nor decent to affect a disbelief of the utmost loyalty to his Majesty; and unwearied with continued repulses, repeatedly petitioning for conciliation, upon such terms only as shall be consistent with the dignity and welfare of the mother country. When we consider these things, we cannot look upon our fellow-subjects in America in any other light than that of freemen driven to resistance by acts of oppression and violence. . . .

Because we conceive the calling in foreign forces



to decide domestic quarrels, to be a measure both disgraceful and dangerous . . .

That Hanoverian troops should, at the mere pleasure of the ministers, be considered as a part of the British military establishment, and take a rotation of garrison duties through these dominions is, in practice and precedent, of the highest danger to the safety and liberties of this kingdom, and tends wholly to invalidate the wise and salutary declaration of the grand fundamental law of our glorious deliverer, King William, which has bound together the rights of the subject and the succession of the crown. . . .

The present ministers, who have deceived Parliament, disgraced the nation, lost the colonies, and involved us in a civil war against our clearest interests; and, upon the most unjustifiable grounds, wantonly spilling the blood of thousands of our fellow subjects. (Oct. 26, 1775.)

## PLAN OF THE SPEECH ON CONCILIATION

Some schools prepare a very elaborate outline of the *Speech on Conciliation*. As an exercise in constructing a complete brief this may have its advantages, but Burke would probably not recognize his own mental processes in that formidable array of sub-subheadings. The ordinary student gets a much truer conception of the structure by referring to the simplest outline; for the speech, like most great works of art, has a very simple plan. Burke arranged the body of his argument (paragraphs 14-117) in three natural divisions: (1) a description of the colonies, (2) why we must concede to them, (3) in what way we must concede. A scheme of all the paragraphs may be exhibited thus:

### INTRODUCTION

- a. Why he ventures to speak on this "awful" subject (1-8).
- b. His proposition is to obtain peace by conceding (9-13).

I. A description of the colonies and of the character of the people (14-47).

II. Why we ought to "admit the colonists to an interest in the British Constitution" (48-77).

III. The best way of "admitting to an interest" is to allow them to grant their own money voluntarily (78-117).

### OBJECTIONS

a. Answers two objections that may be made to his own plan (118-122).

b. Gives four objections to Lord North's plan (123-132).

Peroration: "Our country will be rich and strong if we make it a sanctuary of English liberty" (133-140).

## WHERE BURKE SPOKE

All through the middle ages the palace of the Kings of England stood close to Westminster Abbey on the bank of the Thames, about two miles west of the limits of London. Its "great hall" was a noble room of oak, 300 feet long and 90 high, used for royal festivities and state trials. Projecting from it was the royal chapel, named for St. Stephen, 90 feet long and 30 wide. Two centuries before Burke's time the palace was abandoned as a royal residence, but the hall continued its stately functions: it was here that King Charles was condemned to death and Warren Hastings was impeached. The chapel was fitted up as a House of Commons and had been so used for 220 years before Burke became a member.

The three windows that used to light the altar now lighted the back of the speaker's chair, a massive ornamental panel of gilded wood about ten feet high, surmounted by a carved scroll and coat of arms. All around the room ran five rows of cushioned benches with high backs, like terraces of long pews. Twelve feet above these on each side of the room was a very narrow gallery for visitors, supported by iron pillars. From the high ceiling three large chandeliers hung low in the room, each holding a large cluster of candles. The speaker sat on his throne-like chair, robed in a heavy gown of black and wearing an official wig that reached below his shoulders. Before him was a large table at which the clerks sat and on which the great mace rested in its rack. As the speaker looked over this table, down the length of the room, he saw a floor space about 50 feet long.

On his right sat the members of the majority. The ministers and leaders were in the front row of benches on the floor level, clothed in court dress of purple velvet knee-breeches and frock coat, and wearing a small sword. On the speaker's left were the members of the "opposition." Burke doubtless sat on the front bench. As he rose to speak, he was within a dozen feet of the member on the other side. All about him was a crowd of some 350 aristocratic members: some men of literary

distinction, dozens of military and naval officers, many sons and brothers of lords, many country gentlemen of great wealth and influence.

When he said "Sir," the parliamentary fiction was that he was beginning an address to the chair; it was customary to say frequently during a speech "Sir" or "Mr. Speaker." The man in the chair was Fletcher Norton, who had been elected to the position as a "king's man" at the time when North became prime minister. He was the most adroit and unprincipled lawyer in the country. He was not dispassionate as a chairman should be, but rude and violent. Hence Burke knew the members would relish the irony of his referring in the first sentence to "the *austerity* of the chair."

## NOTES

The numbers refer to paragraphs

1. *An object depending.* For six weeks Burke had been compelled to see North's "grand penal bill" passing through Parliament—a measure for punishing the colonies by forbidding them to fish off Newfoundland. It had passed Commons by a large majority, was sure to pass the Lords, and so "seemed to have taken its flight forever." But strangely enough the Lords, wishing it to be more strict in one particular, had returned it to Commons, so that their amendment might be adopted. When Burke came to the House, his mind was all full of the speech which he had served formal notice that he was going to give—his "motion." This was the "object" that was "depending" (awaiting settlement). He was so much wrought up over his purpose that this unexpected news of the return of the penal bill seemed a good omen. (In his "frailty" he felt a bit "superstitious.")

*Incongruous mixture.* "Restraint" was the ancient policy of limiting commerce to the mother country, the policy of trade laws; "coercion" was the new policy of the King to compel submission by punishment. The two were utterly incongruous, would not mix.

2. *Awful.* Awesome, profoundly serious.

3. In February, 1766, General Conway moved that the Stamp Act should be repealed. Burke used all his powers in supporting the resolution, and Pitt supported it with all his weighty and vehement influence. "The colonists," he said, "would have been slaves if they had not enjoyed the right of granting their own money. I rejoice that America has resisted. Three millions of people, so dead to all feelings of liberty as voluntarily to submit to be slaves, would have been fit instruments



to make slaves of the rest of us." All the commercial interests of the country clamored for repeal. Parliament could not resist such pressure; in March, 1766, the King was forced to sign the repeal. Burke thus describes the emotions that were excited when the vote passed the House: "When the multitude saw General Conway, there arose an involuntary burst of gratulation and transport. All England, all America, joined in the applause. His face was as if it had been the face of an angel. If I had stood in that situation, I would never have exchanged it for all that kings in their profusion could bestow." Burke refers feelingly to that time. The "high authority" that he then felt was one that genius might well "bow under."

4. *Will not miscall*, etc. The truth was that there was open rebellion. Burke will not try to conceal the fact by using a mild name, but he is unwilling to use the terrible name.

5. *Beginning of the session*. A new Parliament had been elected four months previously.

*Public tribunal*. During eight years the King's ministers had been in power; they had been alternately "vigorous" and "lenient" toward the colonies. The minority (the "opposition"), to which Burke belonged, had found fault with every measure, alternately calling the ministers "cruel" and "weak." Hence Burke's party had been as vacillating as the ministers. The "worthy member" had told Burke that the "public tribunal" (public opinion) would now expect the opposition to develop some settled policy, to have some positive plan of its own.

*Produce our hand*. Since gentlemen in Burke's time commonly played cards for money, it was natural and dignified for him to use figures of speech drawn from gambling, like this one: "We can no longer hold our cards and bluff; we must show down."

6. *Worse qualified*. Burke knew, and the members knew, that he was the one best qualified to speak on American affairs; but here, as always, he takes pains to speak of himself with exaggerated modesty. And we must remember that in the House he was a poor Irishman who really had not the prestige to

“dispose the minds” of aristocratic members to favor a motion merely because he proposed it.

8. *Adventitious*. Due to chance—e. g., being high-born or in favor with the ministry.

9. *Fomented from principle*. To *foment* is to stimulate craftily, to incite. The King's guiding “principle” in gaining power had steadily been to “foment discord” among his opposers, to foment discord among his subjects. By getting them to quarrel with each other he acquired power. North's “project” was intended to foment discord among the colonists. Burke explains further in par. 131.

*Unsuspecting confidence*. Burke was fond of quoting this phrase, which the Colonial Congress of 1774 had used in describing American feelings after the repeal of the Stamp Act.

10. *Refined*. Over-subtle.

*Pruriency*. An itching to hear.

*Agents*. The colonies hired agents to lobby for them in Parliament.

*Mace*. In case of a disturbance the speaker might order the great mace carried down the floor to compel quiet. This was a richly ornamented staff about five feet long, surmounted by a heavy crown.

11. *One great advantage*. The greatest advantage to a debater is an admission by his opponent. If Lord North admitted that conciliation was good policy, none of the “king's men” could deny it. Even though Commons had “menaced” the colonies by declaring in an “address” to the King that they would “stand by him at the hazard of their lives and property against all rebellious attempts,” and even though they had passed the penal bill named in the first paragraph, still North had shown that conciliation was admissible.

12. *Submission*. This had always been the King's chief demand: the colonies must “submit.”

*Capital*. Of prime importance.

14. *General theories*. The kernel of Burke's wisdom was that no progress in government can ever be made by theorizing. Again and again in his writings he expresses his detestation of

mere theories. The most useful lesson Americans can learn from this speech is that the only path of progress is to "consider the true nature of things," to observe facts, to meet actual conditions. Since most members of the House were ignorant of the real nature of the colonies, Burke now proceeds (pars. 15-45) to explain it.

15. *500,000 others.* Negro slaves.

16. *Occasional.* Devised merely for an occasion, a makeshift.

*Minima.* Petty matters; the law can provide only for general conditions.

17. *A distinguished person.* Burke had a fondness for digressing to pay compliments to people whom he mentioned, or to expose their weaknesses. This Richard Glover had been a "king's man" in Commons, but as he was not then a member, he could not speak from the floor; he had to stand outside the bar at the end of the room opposite the speaker. Burke's flattery is one of many indications of the conciliatory tone of the speech; for Glover's huge poems had no "fire of imagination," and his knowledge of commerce was not "consummate."

19. *State.* Statement.

20. *African.* The carrying of negro slaves to America. Slavery was abhorred in England and had frequently been protested against in the colonies; Burke avoids naming the disagreeable subject.

25. *It is good for us to be here.* Peter said this to Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. By merely applying the words to his subject Burke elevates the minds of his hearers for his oratorical flight that follows.

*Lord Bathurst.* This is more flattery. Bathurst was a Tory and a "king's man," who had been made an earl in the same year (and for the same reason) that North was given his blue ribbon. He was over 90 years old; his career in Commons began before the first George came to England; and he was an interesting old ornament among the Lords. The Latin means literally: "To read about the affairs of his ancestors, and he will be able to understand what virtue is."

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*Capital*. Of prime importance.

14. *General theories*. The kernel of Burke's wisdom was that no progress in government can ever be made by theorizing. Again and again in his writings he expresses his detestation of

mere theories. The most useful lesson Americans can learn from this speech is that the only path of progress is to "consider the true nature of things," to observe facts, to meet actual conditions. Since most members of the House were ignorant of the real nature of the colonies, Burke now proceeds (pars. 15-45) to explain it.

15. *500,000 others.* Negro slaves.

16. *Occasional.* Devised merely for an occasion, a makeshift.

*Minima.* Petty matters; the law can provide only for general conditions.

17. *A distinguished person.* Burke had a fondness for digressing to pay compliments to people whom he mentioned, or to expose their weaknesses. This Richard Glover had been a "king's man" in Commons, but as he was not then a member, he could not speak from the floor; he had to stand outside the bar at the end of the room opposite the speaker. Burke's flattery is one of many indications of the conciliatory tone of the speech; for Glover's huge poems had no "fire of imagination," and his knowledge of commerce was not "consummate."

19. *State.* Statement.

20. *African.* The carrying of negro slaves to America. Slavery was abhorred in England and had frequently been protested against in the colonies; Burke avoids naming the disagreeable subject.

25. *It is good for us to be here.* Peter said this to Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. By merely applying the words to his subject Burke elevates the minds of his hearers for his oratorical flight that follows.

*Lord Bathurst.* This is more flattery. Bathurst was a Tory and a "king's man," who had been made an earl in the same year (and for the same reason) that North was given his blue ribbon. He was over 90 years old; his career in Commons began before the first George came to England; and he was an interesting old ornament among the Lords. The Latin means literally: "To read about the affairs of his ancestors, and he will be able to understand what virtue is."



*His son.* The younger Bathurst was a peculiarly incompetent judge whom the King made Lord Chancellor in 1771. He used his influence with the King (who is "the fountain of hereditary dignity" because he creates lords) to get his father raised to a higher rank in the peerage—i. e., from baron to earl—in 1772. Burke might have waxed sarcastic about this on another occasion, but here uses only a tinge of irony.

29. *Roman charity.* Referring to a story of a young Roman woman who kept her imprisoned father alive with the milk from her breast.

30. *Excite your envy.* In discussing the penal bill some members had shown the feeling that if the cod fisheries of Newfoundland were so valuable, England could profit by depriving the colonies of the use of them.

*Frozen Serpent.* A group of stars about as near the south pole as the Big Dipper is near the north pole.

*Falkland Island.* These islands in the Atlantic, off the tip of South America, were so barren that until 1763 no "nation's ambition" had thought it worth while to claim them. Burke mentions them because in 1770 the Spaniards had destroyed the English garrison, and war had been imminent.

*Run the longitude.* In nautical language "to run down the longitude" means to sail east or west until the longitude of a given place is reached.

32. When Burke has completed his description of the population and wealth of the colonies, he turns aside (pars. 32-36) to give four objections to the policy of coercing them. This is a kind of punctuation mark between his array of facts just given and his analysis of "the temper and character" that follows in paragraphs 37-45.

*Complexions.* Characters. Even General Gage, who had commanded colonial soldiers and had been liked at Boston, thought that a military force should be used to bring the colonies to submission. His opinions had weight in Commons; Burke refers to his testimony (par. 43).

38. *Jealous affection.* Burke speaks in another speech about

“men of a jealous honor,” meaning “anxiously concerned about their honor.”

*Shuffle by chicane.* To remove in an underhand way by legal trickery.

39. The topic of this paragraph is announced as “English descent,” but the real subject is “English freedom has always been measured by the principle of taxation.” Fix your mind on “taxation.” “When this part of your character was most predominant” means from 1620 to 1650—the time during which Hampden refused to pay the ship-money. This was not a matter of money with Hampden; he was one of “the greatest spirits” who were establishing liberty.

40. *Popular . . . . merely . . . . representative.* The colonial legislatures (“assemblies”) consisted of two houses. The lower was elected by the people (“popular”); the upper was in most colonies appointed by the king. But in some colonies the legislature was entirely (“merely”) elected by the people. In all the colonies the lower house (the “popular representative”) was the more influential (“weighty”).

41. *As in their history.* The point is this: since the church has usually in European history been supported by the government, membership in the church has usually taught obedience to government; but the Protestant dissenters who emigrated to New England originated their church in opposition to government.

43. *Education.* The subject of the paragraph is not “education” in general; that was not in Burke’s mind. He is talking about *legal training*. Blackstone’s *Commentaries on the Laws of England* was published while Burke was a new member of Commons. It was so thorough and useful a book that it is still used in American law schools.

*On the floor.* Some one who sat opposite Burke was taking notes; he sat on the front, the lowest bench, the one on the floor.

*Litigious.* Eager to go to law.

*Abeunt, etc.* What men study is transformed into their customs.

*Mercurial cast.* A lively temperament.

*Augur.* To foretell by signs or omens.

44. *Disobedient.* The King's majority in Parliament felt that the colonies must be made "obedient." Burke merely caters to their way of thinking when he says "disobedient spirit."

*Moral.* In the Latin sense of "pertaining to customs," as in the *mores* of his Latin quotation. The colonies are "accustomed" to popular government, dissident religion, etc.

*Winged ministers, etc.* Jove's eagle carried the thunderbolts in his claws ("pounces"); Burke means by this allusion the warships that carried munitions to America.

*Truck and huckster.* To bargain in a petty way and to haggle about a price.

45. *Power in England.* The King's ministry may have been within the law, but the way they used their power was not in accordance with English ideas of freedom.

46. Burke now (pars. 46-64) proposes the only three possible ways of dealing with America, and shows that the first two are absurd.

*Politics.* General ideas about government.

*Monsters.* It is difficult for a young American to see what "monster" is described in this paragraph and the next. Consider, in the first place, that even nowadays it is an extremely "laborious business to establish a government wholly new." In 1918 three nations (Mexico, China, and Russia) were showing themselves unable even to change their governments successfully. Government is an extremely complicated adjustment of millions of selfish interests; it is almost like a living creature, almost as impossible to make as it would be to create an animal. In the second place, Burke was forever trying to teach his generation this truth, forever inveighing against the fools who wanted to tamper and experiment with government. He knew the immense evil that may be done by upsetting long-established beliefs about religion or government. For these are the old wisdom of the whole race; they can safely be changed only gradually and naturally. Hence he felt that a

successful rebellion in the colonies would be "a concussion of established opinions" at home. He was not merely a conservative; he expected development and reform. But his keen senses perceived the fearful dangers. A "loosening of all ties" was to him a destructive monster. And, in the third place, he was thinking of a much less philosophical monster: if the colonies discovered that they could get along perfectly well without the guardianship of the mother country, they would have less fear of internal disorder in case they wanted a revolution.

*Emanation.* The only legal basis for government in the colonies was the charters by which they were established. If these were removed, no machinery of government would be left; there would be, theoretically, no way of enforcing law and order.

*Operose.* Laboriously difficult.

*Humors.* Dispositions or moods—as in "an ugly humor."

47. *Abrogated government.* Abolished (in 1774), so that the King's power was supreme and the government was no longer representative.

*Anarchy.* If you can imagine a city in which the police force and all the law courts are paralyzed, you can feebly realize how terrified the ministry supposed the colonists would be.

The last sentence of the paragraph states exactly why the Revolution was a civil war: every argument against the freedom of the English in America was equally an argument against the liberties of the people in England.

48. *Giving up the colonies.* This idea was advanced by the dean of Gloucester, whom Burke called "an advocate of the court faction, a Dr. Tucker, whose earnest labors in this vineyard [of pamphleteering] will, I suppose, raise him to a bishopric."

49. *Radical.* Going to the root of a matter.

50. In paragraphs 50-58 Burke reviews his three considerations of population, wealth, and character; and the six causes of the character. But the six causes are not taken up in just their original order.

53. *System of this kind.* The over-stringent trade regulations.

*Spoliatis, etc.* Those who have been despoiled still have arms.

60. England was dealing at home with great mobs and an organized system of smuggling; she applied to these law-breakers the ordinary ideas of criminal justice. But the colonial disturbances—even the Boston Tea Party—represented the unified, sober opinion of a whole people; it was “a great public contest.” The sentence about “an indictment against a whole people” has been constantly quoted, and is frequently seen in American editorials.

*Sir Edward Coke.* “That great oracle of the English law,” as Burke elsewhere calls him, addressed to Raleigh such expressions as “Thou art a spider of hell”; “there never lived a viler viper.” But probably no member of Commons in 1775 knew what Coke had said nearly two centuries before. Why should Burke mention those unknown insults? Because everyone who heard him thought instantly of Wedderburn, a “king’s man,” who, in 1771, deserted Burke’s party, sold himself to North, was made solicitor-general, and in 1774, at a state trial before the privy council of the kingdom, most vilely insulted one excellent individual—Benjamin Franklin. This venerable American, honored everywhere in Europe and loved in England, was compelled to stand for a whole hour before the laughing councillors while the renegade judge used such expressions as “He had the most malignant of purposes”; “he expresses the coolest and most deliberate malice”; “is not the revengeful temper of the bloody African surpassed by the coolness of the wily American?” Burke was horror-struck by this address. Even Lord North saw the insane folly of it. Twenty years after the Revolution was over Fox could rouse the House by describing this scene—ininitely more shameful and less excusable than the one in which Raleigh was insulted. It is possible that Burke used Franklin’s name in speaking, but changed to Raleigh when he wrote his speech.

61. *Nice.* Delicate and difficult to adjust.

*Ex vi termini.* From the very meaning of the expression.

63. *On our address.* Because of addresses to the King, put through Commons by North, urging him to coerce the colonies.



66. Fix your attention on "are taxed." Burke's argument has nothing to say about representation for the colonies—except to deny that representation is desirable.

67. Fix your attention on the italicized word *right*. Burke has a great deal to say about taxation, but nothing about the question of the abstract *right*.

*Polity.* Government.

*Great names.* Pitt and Lord Chancellor Camden believed that England had not even the abstract right to tax the colonies. Burke and most thoughtful men believed the contrary.

The quotation is from *Paradise Lost*, Book II.

68. Notice that the whole point depends upon the *if* in the first sentence; Burke names an utterly impossible condition.

69. "Admitting to an interest" is *not* representation. High-school students naturally jump to that conclusion, but Burke's method of admitting to an interest is entirely different.

70. *Understood principle.* The repeal of the Stamp Act was an announcement that England did not intend to exercise the right of taxing. But the repeal was accompanied by an act declaring that the right to tax still remained—that "the principle was understood."

71. *Financiers.* Men who had charge of national finances no longer expected income from American taxation; they were simply afraid of losing control in all ways if they yielded in this particular.

*Exquisite.* Anxious about the future.

Paragraphs 72-74 are a very pretty demonstration that the King's ministers had never been primarily concerned with an income from American taxation; their royal master wanted submission. When the trade laws had been enforced with a fierce stringency, the reason avowed in Commons was the need of an income from America. North had repeatedly argued that the purpose of trade laws was income. So paragraph 72 means: "Very well, my lord, if the Americans yield so much from their commerce, surely it is unreasonable to tax them in addition"; to which the noble lord replies, "Oh, trade laws don't really restrict, *don't really extract money* from the Colonists." And

paragraph 73 is like this bit of dialogue: "But you see, my lord, that it is utterly impossible to get any income from taxation"; to which North replies, "Oh, I know, but we must preserve our precious trade laws that *bring in so much money.*"

74. *The pamphlet.* North had used arguments from a pamphlet by Dr. Tucker.

*Laws, regulations.* The "revenue laws" are laws for taxation; the "commercial regulations" are for restraining trade.

75. *Not a shadow of evidence.* In his great speech on *American Taxation*, delivered eleven months previously, Burke had argued this point at great length, vehemently and conclusively; he exposed the whole pitiful series of lies and quibbles and evasions by which the King's mouthpieces had defended their schemes for taxation.

76. *The colonies will go further.* In *American Taxation* Burke had said: "But still it sticks in our throats—if we go so far, the Americans will go further." It was an argument that the ministers had continually used for a decade.

79. *Philip the Second.* The powerful and despotic king of Spain, who sent the Armada against England.

*Four examples.* In paragraphs 78-88 there are four examples of admitting to an interest in the British Constitution. They are simply examples of *admitting to an interest.* The way in which these four places were admitted has nothing to do with the case.

80. *The English conquest.* In the twelfth century.

*Irish pensioners.* Men whose pensions were paid out of the grants made by the Irish parliament.

81. *Lords Marchers.* "Lords of the borders" between England and her dependencies on the west and north—i. e., Wales and Scotland.

83. *Incubus.* A demon that caused nightmare.

84. In the twelfth ode of his first book Horace is describing the power that Castor and Pollux have over the stormy sea: "As soon as their clear star shines upon the sailors, the spray flows down from the rocks, the winds die down, the clouds flee

away, and (since it is their will) the wave subsides upon the sea.'"

85. The petition of Chester is composed of two reasons and a therefore: "The inhabitants of Chester show to your majesty that (1) whereas we have had no representatives in Parliament, and (2) whereas we have been bound by the laws just as much as the counties that have representatives, therefore we have been touched and grieved."

86. These questions are repetitions of violent expressions used by "king's-men" in advising Parliament how to treat petitions from the Americans.

87. *Abstract extent.* That is, Parliament remedied the grievance "on the understood principle" that it still had the abstract right to collect subsidies if it chose.

89. Students who have not been specially warned almost always suppose, as Burke's auditors did, that we are now going to hear about a scheme for giving representation to the colonies. Nothing of the sort.

*Opposuit.* Nature has raised a barrier.

90. *Republic*, etc. These are the names of three books that describe ideal governments. They were written twenty-one centuries, three centuries, and one century, respectively, before Burke's time.

The quotation is from *Comus*.

*Representation.* The emphasis is not upon this word, but upon the "policy"—namely, that *taxation was unjust* unless there was representation.

91. *By grant.* Here is Burke's method of admitting the colonies to an interest in the Constitution—by allowing them to grant their own money voluntarily. "Taxation by grant" is a very peculiar expression, for the two nouns have exactly opposite meanings. It is somewhat like an Irish bull, meaning: "The just way to tax America is not to tax her at all."

*Imposition.* Taxation imposed by Parliament.

The six italicized expressions do not correspond to the six propositions that he announces in the next paragraph.

93-108. Students are often puzzled by the nature of these

resolutions. Any ordinary motion offered in a meeting proposes some action; it is debatable. But why should anyone ever "move that  $2+3=5$ "? The colonies had never had representatives in Parliament; why "resolve that they never have had"? The answer is brief: customary forms are strange things, and parliamentary form made it natural for Burke to put his propositions in this shape. The first five are statements of merest fact—except possibly for "touched and grieved" in the second; that is why Burke devotes a long paragraph (96) to showing that the colonies were touched and grieved. But the sixth contains a real resolution; to have carried that would have been to defeat George III.

95. Horace begins a satire by remarking in parenthesis, "This is no discourse of mine, but what Ofellus teaches, a rustic, self-taught fellow." So Burke says that he is offering what is taught by the rustic, home-bred sense of his country (not by the craft of a king from Hanover).

96. *The sixth.* Parliamentary acts were numbered by the year of the reign; the sixth year of George the Second's reign was 1733.

*For the ministry.* A whole chapter of Germanic lying and intriguing is implied in those three words. In *American Taxation* there is a long and bitter passage in which Burke flays Lord Hillsborough. See introduction, page 34, for an account of the secret letter which Hillsborough wrote to trick the colonists. Of course this letter was ultimately known about in England. It became a public acknowledgment by the ministry that "duties had been laid contrary to the true principle of commerce," and that "only men with factious and seditious views could propose to tax America." The lying letter could never have been written, would have had no point, unless the ministers knew that the colonies were touched and grieved.

97. *Is impossible.* In his *Observations on The Present State of the Nation* Burke draws an amusing picture of how impossible representation would have been in an age when six weeks was record time for a trip across the Atlantic, and twenty (or even forty) not unusual. Here is one extract:

“However, we will suppose the American candidates once more elected [after two round trips of 6000 miles each] and steering again to old England with a good heart and a fair westerly wind in their stern. On their arrival they find all in a hurry and bustle. The King is dead! Another parliament is to be called. Away back to America again on a third voyage and to a third election.”

99. *Competence.* This legal distinction of the “competence” of the colonies to grant seems to us now like an empty theory or quibble. But it went to the root of the whole matter. To admit formally such a legal competence was to admit that the colonial assemblies were legally on a level with Parliament. Such competence had never been admitted, though England had accepted the grants.

*His Majesty*—. Burke pretends that he was about to say, “His Majesty has committed impeachable offenses,” but that he changes to “the ministers” so as not to use unparliamentary language. Legally “the king can do no wrong”; his ministers are responsible.

100. *So high as.* So far back as.

*Taxes.* These were taxes that the colonies laid upon themselves.

106. The sixth resolution is the one that counts, for the whole struggle reduced to this question: Does taxation conduce to public benefit (“service”)?

109. Of the five resolutions here lumped together the first is for removing the obnoxious duties; the other four are for removing penal acts.

110-113. The five resolutions are not commented on in the order in which they are given, but in the order 2, 4, 3, 5.

110. *Partial.* Prejudiced, unfair. The same meaning is in *partially* at the end of the paragraph.

111. *Returning-officer, cause.* The officer who selected a jury, a law-case.

112. *Murder.* This refers to soldiers who, under military orders, killed Americans.

114. *Judicature.* System of courts. The point of the reso-



lution is that Americans could not be sure of just judges unless two conditions were fulfilled: (1) that the judges got their pay from the colonists, (2) that they held office until the colonists complained of them. Under these two conditions the king could have no power over a judge.

115. The courts of admiralty tried all cases under the trade laws. Two reforms are proposed: (1) to locate them at such ports that captains could have their cases tried promptly, (2) to give the judges salaries instead of letting them derive their income "indecently" from the share of the smuggled goods that they condemned.

119. *Lord Chatham.* The elder Pitt.

*Not from the Chester act.* Because the people of Chester had made a general complaint against being bound by English laws; Durham had, like the colonies, complained only of a form of taxation.

*De jure, de facto.* Legally, as a matter of fact.

120. *Illation.* Inference.

*To make slaves haughty.* A slave in the house of a wealthy patrician may feel haughty when he compares himself with a freeman who is a poor laborer; yet, even if this is so, we need not expect that the colonists will care to be slaves in the proud household of our empire.

*Cords of a man.* In the 11th chapter of *Hosea* God describes how he tried to keep the love of the Israelites: "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love."

122. "Would dissolve the unity" is the second objection. Burke said "some" in 118, but he names only two. In the *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol* he spoke sarcastically (as he does here) about "troubling our understandings with speculations concerning the *unity* of empire." To him this talk about "unity" was silly metaphysics.

124. *Experimentum, etc.* Experiment upon some worthless object.

125. Here is a demonstration of how the project would cause a most dangerous increase of the King's power.

126. *Contingent.* Quota of revenue.

127. Five "difficulties" are discussed, one in each of paragraphs 127-131.

128. *Outcry*. Announcement that an auction is to be held.  
*Composition*. Terms of agreement by which a creditor accepts a smaller payment than is due.

130. *Extent*. A legal process for seizing a debtor's property to compel payment.

132. *Contingent*. Depending on chance.

*To spare it altogether*. He did speak on the subject at least twice more, though never in a long, formal effort. In November of 1776 he withdrew for fifteen months from all discussions of American affairs, because he wanted the world to know that he had no hand in such ruinous legislation.

133. *Posita*, etc. The game is played with the whole money-chest at stake.

*Accumulated a debt*. People had shown their patriotism by lending money; the country owed the debt to its citizens.

134. *Absolute power*. These words here and "a government purely arbitrary" in 120 are colorless for us today, but to Burke they were the lurid realities of the ambition of a German king.

The quotation is from the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*.

135. *Compounding*. See *composition*, paragraph 128.

*Speed*. Succeed.

136. *Taxable objects*. For example, on tobacco shipped from Virginia a duty was paid at London by the English merchant; then the merchant shipped to France and sold for a price that would pay the duty and yield him a good profit in addition.

137. In this peroration we see why Burke was so scornful of the arguments of "king's men" about "unity" of empire. He says in this burst of feeling—as true and sensible as it is eloquent—that "participation of freedom is the sole bond that made and must always preserve the unity of empire." This single sentence sums up the whole difference between the Hanover conception of empire and the Anglo-Saxon conception.

138. *Land Tax Act*, etc. These three acts, providing for revenue and an army, had to be passed every year; hence Parliament had to be summoned every year, and a king had no chance to rule without Commons. It was therefore natural for Englishmen to think that these bills were the guaranty of their liberties.

139. Burke here carries out his figure of a "temple of concord" (92) and an "altar of peace" (95) by using *profane* and *initiated*. Men like North and Hillsborough were "unfit to enter the temple"; men of Burke's party had been "admitted to the sacred rites." If all the members had glowed with zeal for wise government, they would have begun their proceedings with a sacred rite ("auspicate"), saying, as a priest does when he prepares the sacrament, "Lift up your hearts."

140. *Quod felix*, etc. May it be prosperous and of good omen.

## A BRIEF BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Some of the best descriptions of the nature of the American Revolution:

*The American Revolution*, by John Fiske, vol. I, chapters 1-3.

*The American Revolution*, by G. O. Trevelyan, Part I, chapters 2-8; Part II, vol. I.

*George the Third and Charles Fox*, by G. O. Trevelyan.

*A History of the English People*, by J. R. Green, Book IX, chapter 2.

*History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, by W. E. H. Lecky, vol. III, chapters 10, 11, and 12.

*History of the American People*, by Woodrow Wilson, vol. II, chapter 3.

Lecky gives the most detailed account of the power of George III.

2. A striking (and quite reliable) revelation of the power of George III is Burke's *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*. His speech on *American Taxation* illuminates many parts of the *Conciliation*, and his *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol* shows his bitter feeling against the Teutonic machinations that had made conciliation almost impossible.

3. Better insight into the conditions that produced the *Conciliation* can be gained by reading about prominent statesmen of the time in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, or any other good encyclopedia. Most enlightening are the lives of John Stuart (third Earl of Bute) and Frederick North. Others (approximately in order of direct usefulness) are Alexander Wedderburn, Fletcher Norton, John Dunning, William Pitt (the elder), the two Bathursts, Charles James Fox, Charles Townshend, George Grenville.

4. Anyone who can get access to the *Parliamentary History* will be abundantly repaid for looking through the recorded speeches of the session from December, 1774, to April, 1776.

## APPENDIX

(Adapted, and enlarged, from the *Manual for the Study of English Classics*, by George L. Marsh)

### HELPS TO STUDY

#### LIFE AND WORKS OF BURKE

When and where was Burke born (p. 22)? Where was he educated? For what purpose and when did he go to London?

What was his first literary work (p. 22)?

What annual publication was he associated with for many years? In what ways did he prepare himself for his future work?

Who were the most important of his associates (p. 23)?

When was he first seated in Parliament (p. 24), and what was the subject of his "maiden speech"?

For how long was he prominent in politics? With what general success (p. 26)?

What three great subjects was Burke particularly interested in during his political career?

What was his general attitude toward the policies of George III?

Summarize Burke's work on behalf of the American colonies, naming two important speeches and one letter which he wrote on the question.

What was Burke's most important work on the Indian question (p. 27)? The immediate result? The result in the long run?

What was his attitude toward the French Revolution (p. 28)?

What is the common estimate of Burke as an orator and political philosopher (pp. 25, 26, 28)?

An interesting estimate of Burke may be found in Goldsmith's "Retaliation" (Newcomer and Andrews, *Twelve Centuries of English Poetry and Prose*, p. 380).



## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE SPEECH ON CONCILIATION

What error as to the causes of the American Revolution has persisted in school books, but is corrected in this edition (p. 3)? Collect from the various parts of this book the evidences of the editor's fundamental contention, and classify the evidence.

When did the "modern development of English liberties" begin (p. 11)? How was real popular rule enforced even under the first two German kings (George I and II)? Did the cabinet government then differ materially from English cabinet government now? Specify differences if you find them.

What relation does the capture of Fort Duquesne, or the war of which it was an event, bear to the struggle against autoeracy (p. 10)?

What are the main facts as to George III's race and character (pp. 14-21, 146-162)? How did he proceed to procure absolute control even under a parliamentary government?

Why did England begin to tax the colonies in America (p. 29)? What had been the previous method of getting money from them? Note the use of these facts in the *Speech on Conciliation*.

By whom was the Stamp Act devised (p. 31)? What was its nature? Why did the colonies object to it? What was its fate? After how long an attempt to enforce it?

When did Lord North come into power (p. 32)? What sort of person was he? How long was he head of the administration?

Note carefully the series of events indicating the colonies' attitude toward the principle of taxation (p. 35).

What was the "one simple cause" (p. 16) elucidated by Burke in his *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, 1770? Do you find in the extracts from this pamphlet (pp. 218-236) material directly bearing on the American Revolution? Answer specifically.

When was Burke's *Speech on American Taxation* (pp. 169-193) delivered—the specific occasion (p. 169)? Find examples of the difference in tone between this speech and the *Speech on Conciliation*, as indicated on page 17.

From a study of the Collateral Readings (particularly pp. 129-145 and 265-282) what do you conclude as to the feeling of the English people in general regarding the trouble with the American colonies?

What impressions of Lord Chatham, the elder Pitt, do you get from Burke's comments (p. 185) and from the extracts from Pitt's speeches (pp. 243-255)? What impressions of Fox (pp. 256-264)?

What, in the long run, was the result in England of George III's attempts to tyrannize over the people (p. 37)?

When and where was the *Speech on Conciliation* delivered (pp. 36, 284)? What was the direct occasion for it? The result of it? Show why this result reflects in no way on the effectiveness of the speech.

What was the occasion of Burke's *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol* (pp. 193-217)? The status of the American Revolution at that time?

#### DETAILS OF THE SPEECH ON CONCILIATION

What do you find to be the purpose of Burke's introduction? Do you notice any devices to indicate that the speech was unprepared (par. 1)? Was Burke really superstitious?

What is the effect of the hesitation for a proper word at the end of paragraph 4? Of the familiar colloquial expressions in paragraph 5?

What subtle irony do you find in paragraph 7? Point out other examples of the same quality later on.

What great governmental principle is at the bottom of paragraph 10?

How has the House admitted what Burke, in paragraph 12, says it has admitted?

Why is the population of the colonies an argument in favor of conciliation (pp. 49, 50)? The commerce? What is the substance of Burke's evidence regarding commerce?

Is paragraph 25 in any sense a digression? What, precisely, is its relation to the course of the argument?

Why should Burke turn again to specific figures in paragraph 26?

What is the argumentative effect of paragraph 28?

What literary qualities do you find in paragraph 30?

What universal political principles are stated in paragraphs 32-36?

What is the function, as a paragraph, of paragraph 37? Find similar examples farther on.

Why do the references to the history of England in paragraph 39 apply specifically to the American colonies?

In what ways is force secured in paragraph 44?

What is the purpose, as a paragraph, of paragraph 45? Show how it differs from paragraph 37. Find similar examples farther on.

Can you think of any other feasible ways of proceeding besides those mentioned by Burke in paragraph 48?

Why should paragraph 52 be set off as a paragraph?

How had England shown the disposition to impoverish the colonies mentioned in paragraph 53?

What powerful bits of sarcasm do you find in paragraphs 54, 57, 58?

State in substance the sound political wisdom underlying paragraphs 60 and 61.

What does Burke gain by leaving out of consideration the right of taxation (par. 67)? To what feeling is the appeal of this paragraph?

Explain in your own words the inconsistency which Burke points out in paragraphs 72-74. On this matter see the *Speech on American Taxation* (pp. 169-193).

Explain all historical references of importance in paragraphs 80-87.

Consider paragraphs 80 in the light of the present "Irish question."

Summarize the points of similarity between England's treatment of Wales and of the American colonies, as given in paragraph 82.

Why should Burke, in paragraph 85, quote the exact language of the people of Chester?

Do the questions in paragraph 86 indicate anything as to the course of procedure adopted by Parliament with relation to American petitions?

Is paragraph 87 a unit?

Explain carefully the actual concession which Burke proposes in paragraph 91.

What is the effect of paragraph 92, followed by resolutions all but one embodying mere matters of fact, couched in the language of previous Parliaments?

Name all the literary effects you find prominent in paragraph 95.

What historical events were the basis for the resolution of 1748 (par. 101)? That of 1756?

Why should Burke precede his sixth resolution by the bit of argument contained in paragraph 105?

Which of the acts mentioned for repeal in paragraph 109 does Burke discuss specifically in the following paragraphs? Can you tell why he does not discuss all?

For more details as to paragraph 113, see Burke's *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol* (pp. 194, 195).

Explain the resolutions as to courts (pars. 114-15).

What is the essential point of paragraph 120?

Do you think Burke really almost forgot his purpose to comment on the plan of Lord North, as referred to in paragraph 123? Does he, however, give sufficient attention to it? State clearly all his points against it.

How would Lord North's plan break the union of the colonies (par. 131)?

Note the effective antithesis of paragraph 132.

Explain the figure at the end of paragraph 133.

What is the nature and purpose of Burke's concluding appeal? Is it necessary to the argument?

What was the "ideal of democracy" expressed by Burke (p. 6), and how does this speech bring it out?

## THEME SUBJECTS

1. Burke's life (pp. 22-29). See also reference works and biographies.
2. Burke's literary friends (p. 23; cf. Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Irving's *Oliver Goldsmith*, etc.).
3. Burke's work in behalf of the American colonies.
4. Burke and Indian affairs (cf. Macaulay's *Warren Hastings*).
5. Burke and the French Revolution (p. 28).
6. Summary of the historical events leading up to the *Speech on Conciliation*.
7. The character and aims of George III (pp. 14-21, 146-162).
8. English opinion in relation to the American colonies (pp. 129-145, 243-282).
9. Explanation of the measures Burke wished repealed.
10. Arguments on the measures separately.
11. The growth of the American colonies (pp. 49-56). (Contrast the America Burke thought so wonderful with America today.)
12. The causes of the American love of freedom (pp. 60 ff.). Can additions be made to Burke's list?
13. Historical precedents in favor of conciliation (pp. 89 ff.).
14. Parallels between the case of Wales and that of America (pp. 91 ff.).
15. Characteristics of Burke's choice of words.
16. Sarcasm in this speech. (Is it effective? Cite examples.)
17. Burke's principles of government (pp. 46, 59 ff., 124 ff., etc.).
18. Burke's character as indicated by this speech.
19. The paragraph structure of this speech.
20. How the speech was received and what it accomplished. (Would a similar speech be effective if delivered in our United States House of Representatives, in the face of a hostile majority?)



## SELECTIONS FOR CLASS READING

1. Burke's reasons for speaking (pp. 41-46).
2. The growth of America (pp. 53-55, 57-58).
3. The American love of freedom (pp. 60-68).
4. Possible ways of dealing with the colonies (pp. 72-80).
5. Burke's general proposition (pp. 81-84).
6. Precedents for conciliation (pp. 89-95).
7. The first two resolutions (pp. 98-101).
8. Objections to Lord North's plan (pp. 115-121).
9. Conclusion (pp. 124-127).
10. English views of the American Revolution (pp. 129-132).
11. How officers viewed the service against America (pp. 140-144).
12. How George III built up his power (pp. 149-154).
13. Lecky's characterization of George III (pp. 156-161).
14. The repeal of the Stamp Act (pp. 183-186).
15. Burke's view of taxation (pp. 189-193).
16. Evil results of the American war (pp. 197-202).
17. The Earl of Chatham's view (pp. 244-249).

## INDEX

Numbers refer to pages. Numbers 5-39 refer to *Preface* and *Introduction*, 41-127 to the text of the *Speech*, 129-282 to the *Collateral Readings*, 283-303 to the *Notes*.

- Abeunt studia*, 67, 291  
 Abrogated charter of Mass.,  
   35, 70, 108, 109, 197, 293  
 Absolute power, 123  
 Abstract extent, 95, 297  
 Abstract right, see Rights,  
   Theories  
 Act of Henry VIII, 80, see  
   Trials in England  
 Act of navigation, 85, 111,  
   125, 192  
*Acta parentum*, 54, 289  
 Addresses to King, 47, 80, 194,  
   243, 288, 294  
 Admiralty courts, 110, 111, 300  
 Admit to an interest, 84, 295,  
   296, 297  
 Advantage, one great, 47, 288  
*Adventitious*, 45, 288  
 African trade, 52, 58, 289  
 Agents' colony, 47, 118, 288  
 Agriculture, 56-57  
 Algiers, 68  
 America, Burke's references to  
   in the *Conciliation*, 42, 43,  
   47, 49, 52, 53, 55, 59, 60, 62  
*American Taxation*, excerpts  
   169-193; references to, 17,  
   34, 296, 298, 303  
 Anarchy, 71, 95, 293  
 Angola, 77  
*Annual Register*, 23  
 Appalachian, 73  
 Arabia, 67  
 Aristotle, 114  
 Armada, 296  
 Assemblies, colonial, 63, 66, 70,  
   71, 76, 78, 98, 102-106, 110,  
   122, 209, 210, 291, 299  
 Auction, 47, 116, 117, 118, 120  
*Augur*, 67, 292  
*Auspicate*, 302  
*Austerity*, 41, 285  
 Austria, 29  
*Awful*, 42, 286  
 Bank, 122  
 Bar, 51, 57  
 Barré, 31, 241, 279  
 Bastille, 28  
 Bathurst, 54, 289, 290, 303  
 Bengal, 124  
 Bibliography, 303  
 Blackstone, 66, 291

- Blue ribbon, 33, 47
- Board of Trade, Burke's speech on, 242
- Boston, 33, 66, 243, 251; Massacre, 35; Port Bill, 35, 108, 120, 197; see Tea Party
- Bourbon, 10
- Brazil, 58
- British, see Empire, Freedom, Privileges, Constitution
- Brunswick, 54, 220, 223
- Brusa, 68
- Builders of Democracy*, 20
- Burgoyne, 21; Burke's speech on defeat, 237-242
- Burke, sketches of life, 22-29, 31, 146, 301; selections, 169-236; power of oratory, 25, 237-242; see names of his speeches and essays
- Burney, 24
- Bute, 15, 30, 162-163, 165, 167, 230, 231, 303
- Cabal (court faction), 222, 224, 226-228
- Cabinet, double, 229
- Camden, 276, 295
- Canada, 10, 29
- Cape Breton, 103
- Capital*, 47, 288
- Carolinas, 35, 65, 77, 118
- Catholics, 22, 28, 63, 75, 161
- Cause*, 109, 299
- Chair, 285, see Norton
- Charter of Mass., see Abrogated
- Chatham, speeches quoted, 243-255; referred to, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 22, 27, 30, 31, 32, 112, 131, 142, 164, 183, 223, 286, 295, 300, 303
- Chester, 93-95, 100, 111, 112, 115, 297, 300
- Chicane*, 61, 291
- Church of England, 64, 76
- Civil War, American, 38
- Coke, 78, 294
- Coercion, 35, 41, 81, 130, 280, 290, see Restraint
- "Colonies will go further," 85, 87, 112, 113, 181, 188, 296
- Colonies, see America, see names of colonies
- Commerce, 50-56
- Commercial regulations, 296
- Commons described, 15, 129-130, 148, 152, 284-285; Burke on nature of, 234-236; Burke's references to, 41, 43, 51, 62, 85, 89, 104, 116, 117, 122
- Competence of assemblies, 102, 299
- Complexions*, 59, 290
- Composition*, 118, 301
- Compounding*, 123, 301
- Compromise and barter, 113
- Comus*, 97, 297
- Concession from superior power, 48, 253

- Conciliation, 35, 46, 47, 48,  
 59, 81, 88, 109, 121, 246, 251,  
 270  
 Condé, 252  
 Confidence, 46, see Unsuspect-  
 ing  
 Congress, 24, 66, 111, 252, 288  
 Connecticut, 103, 109  
 Considerations three, 49, 50,  
 54, 60, 290, 293  
 Constitution, 21, 29, 62, 88,  
 89, 99, 114, 116, 124-126,  
 215, 249, 250, 290  
*Contingent* (adj.), 121, 301;  
 (noun), 117, 300  
 Conway, 142, 275, 286, 287  
 Cords of a man, 114, 300  
*Corn*, 57, 179  
 Cornwall, 166, 184  
 Cornwallis, 37  
 County palatine, 93  
 Courts in America, 110, 111  
 Crimea, 68  
 Criminal, treating colonies as,  
 77-81  
  
 Davenant, 51  
 Davies, 89  
 Davis' Straits, 57  
 Debt, English public, 122, 301  
 Decent maintenance, 111, 300  
*De jure*, 112, 300  
 Difficulties great, 118-120, 301  
 Disobedient, 67, 292  
*Dissidence of dissent*, 64  
 Distance of colonies, 67, 77,  
 96, 97, 101, 102, 118, 298  
 Distinguished person (Glover),  
 51, 289  
 Dunmore, 70  
 Dunning, 19, 278, 303  
 Duquesne, 9, 10  
 Durham, 96, 100, 112, 115  
  
 Ease would retract, 123  
 East India Company, 124, 181  
*Economical Reform*, 241  
 Education, 66, 76, 291  
 Edward I, 91  
 Effingham, 143, 272  
 Egypt, 67  
 Elizabeth, 90  
*Emanation*, 69, 293  
 Empire, defined, 78; Ameri-  
 can, 127; British, 27, 42, 45,  
 46, 55, 78, 83, 88, 114, 115,  
 120, 121, 125, 127, 209; see  
 Unity  
 Envy, 57, 290  
 Experience, 116, 121; see The-  
 ories  
*Experimentum*, 116, 300  
*Exquisite*, 85, 295  
*Extent*, 120, 301  
*Ex vi termini*, 79, 294  
  
 Falkland Island, 57, 290  
*Financiers*, 85, 121, 295  
 First had the honor of a seat,  
 42, 43; see Session  
 Fisheries, 57, 74, 92, 119, 290  
 Fiske, 6, 303  
 Floor, 66, 291

- Fomented*, 46, 288  
 For the ministry, 101; see Hillsborough  
 Force, 59-60, 204  
 Force sent to America, 81  
 Foreign mercenaries, see German  
 Four examples, 89, 296  
 Fox, Charles J., extracts from speeches, 256-265; referred to, 18, 19, 139, 147, 241, 270, 303  
 Fox, Henry, 165, 167  
 Frailty, 41, 286  
 France, 29, 149, 199  
 Franklin, 268, 294  
 Frederick the Great, 133  
 Freedom (a few references to Liberty, Rights), 5, 7, 10, 14, 15, 20, 27, 30, 36, 37, 60, 65, 66, 71, 75, 82, 84, 89, 93, 114, 115, 123, 124-127, 149, 207, 215, 216, 291, 293, 301  
 French and Indian War, 10  
  
 Gage, 66, 243, 245, 252  
 Gambling, 287; see Bank, Table, Hand, Game  
 Game, 44  
 Garter, 33  
*Gaspee*, 35  
 Gates, 29  
 George I, 13  
 George II, 13, 101, 104, 225  
 George III, 11, 13-21, 30-34, 36, 37, 54, 102, 110, 130-134, 137, 147-155, 156-168, 172, 196, 254, 288, 290, 298, 300, 301, 303  
 German, Germany, 5, 11, 12, 13, 14, 20, 33, 120, 156, 199, 200, 202, 206, 207, 254, 275, 280, 282, 290, 297, 298, 299  
 Gibbon 15, 146, 242  
 Giving up the colonies, 72, 293  
 Glover, 51, 289  
 Good for us to be here, 54, 289  
 Gothic, 65  
 Grand Penal Bill, 18, 41, 47, 286  
 Grants of land, 73; of money, 91, 93, 95, 98, 102-107, 122, 210, 295  
 Green, 6, 303  
 Greenlaw, 20  
 Grenville, 30, 31, 105, 112, 303  
 Guinea, 77  
  
 Halifax, Earl, 186, 187  
 Hampden, 291  
 Hand, 44, 287  
 Hanover, 12, 14  
 Hapsburg, 10  
 Harrington, 97  
 Hartley, 268  
 Hastings, 25, 27, 284  
 Henry III, 91  
 Henry VIII, 93, 108, 110; see Trials in England  
 House, see Commons, Parliament  
*High*, 103, 299  
 Hillsborough, 34, 101; letter of, 172-178; 181, 298, 302



- Holland, 58  
 Horace, 296, 298  
 Howe, 277  
 Hudson's Bay, 57  
 Hume, 132  
*Humors*, 70, 293
- Illation*, 113, 300  
 Impeachable offenses, 102  
 Imports to England, 56  
 Imposition, 98, 106, 118, 297  
 Incongruous mixture, 41, 286;  
   see *Restraint*  
*Incubus*, 92  
 India, 27, 28, 29, 124  
 Indian wars, 103  
 Indictment of whole people,  
   78, 93, 294  
 Influence, 219  
*Initiated*, 302  
 Inquisition, 76  
 Ireland, 89, 115, 122, 160, 250,  
   296  
 Irish pensioners, 154, 296  
 Irnham, 19  
 Isle of Man, 179
- Jealous*, 61, 290  
 Jewel of his soul, 113  
 Johnson, Dr., 23  
 Johnstone, Gov., 19, 25, 239,  
   265  
 Judge, acting as, 79  
 Judges in America, 110, 111  
 Judicature, 110, 299  
 Junto, 232
- King, see George III  
 King's men (some references  
   are to king's friends, Swiss  
   of state, etc.), 4, 17, 19, 32,  
   130, 162, 166, 182, 183, 187,  
   220, 229, 232, 233, 234, 285,  
   288, 289, 294, 297, 301  
 Kurdistan, 68
- Labyrinth, 119, 201  
 Land Tax Act, 126, 302  
 Law, 66, 76, 291  
 Lecky, quoted, 156-168; re-  
   ferred to, 4, 20, 303  
*Letter to the Sheriffs of Bris-  
 to*l, extracts, 193-217; re-  
   ferred to, 300, 303  
 Levis, Duc de, 25  
 Lexington, 11, 22, 36  
 Liberty, see *Spirit of Liberty*,  
   *Freedom*  
 Lincoln, 26  
 Links of iron, 124  
*Litigious*, 66, 291  
 Lords Marchers, 91, 296  
 Luttrell, 18, 266
- Mace, 47, 284, 288  
 Magna Charta, 89  
 Magnanimity, 4, 22, 127  
 Majesty, 102  
 Manchester, Duke of, 19  
 Manners in South, 68  
 Manufactures, 30, 117, 119,  
   178  
 Marine enterprises, see *Fish-  
 eries*

- Maryland, 118  
 Massachusetts, 35, 71, 80, 103, 108, 109, 187, 188; charter of, see Abrogated  
 Menaces, 76, 288  
 Mercenaries, see German  
*Mercurial*, 67, 292  
*Merely*, 63  
 Metaphysical, 114, 189, 208, 244, 300; see Theories  
*Minima*, 50, 289  
 Ministry defined, 12; North's ministry, 18, 44, 101, 102, 135, 136, 138, 145, 244, 247, 251, 259, 263, 287, 292, 298  
 Monopolists, 73  
 Monsters, 69, 292  
 Moral, 67, 77, 114, 292  
 More, 97  
 Mr. Speaker, 54, 285; see Norton  
 Murder, 109, 299  
 Mutiny Bill, 126  
 Nebuchadnezzar, 18  
 Neglect salutary, 58, 211  
 Negroes, 49, 77  
 Newcastle, 13, 15, 164-165, 223  
 Newfoundland, 286, 290  
 New Hampshire, 103  
 New York, 32  
*Nice*, 79, 294  
 Noble lord in the blue ribbon, 47; see North; see Blue ribbon  
*Non meus*, 99  
 North, 18-21, 32-37, 47, 48, 85, 86, 101, 116, 120, 139, 148, 151-153, 175, 178, 192, 193, 239, 241, 260, 263, 270, 288, 289, 294, 295, 302, 303  
 Norton, 18, 256, 285, 303  
 Objections, to force, 59-60; to stopping grants of land, 73; to Burke's resolutions, 111-115; to North's project, 116-120  
*Observations on the Present State of the Nation*, 298  
*Occasional*, 50, 289  
*Oceana*, 97  
*Opèrose*, 69, 293  
 Opinions allowed, established, 71, 74, 190, 208, 211, 218, 292  
 Opposition, defined, 13; "us," 44, 284, 287  
*Opposuit natura*, 97, 297  
 Outcry, 118, 301  
 Outline of *Conciliation*, 283  
 Pamphlet (Tucker's), 86, 296  
*Paradise Lost*, 301  
 Parties in America, 123  
 Parliament (Burke's references to), 43, 48, 72, 82, 84, 89, 91, 92, 95, 100, 102, 104, 111, 112, 117, 118  
*Parliamentary History*, extracts, 265-282; referred to, 17, 303  
*Partial*, 108, 299

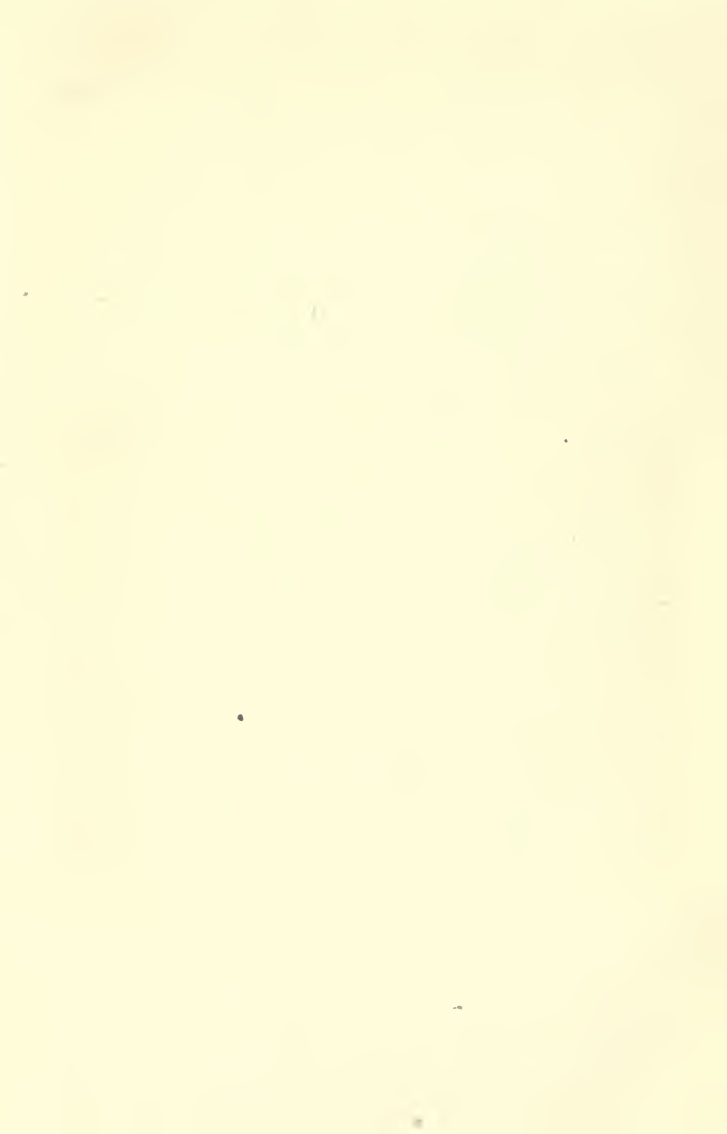
- Peace, 46, 48, 116, 120
- Penal laws, 81, 96; in Wales, 92; see Grand Penal Bill, Repeal of Penal Acts
- Pennsylvania, 56
- Pensioners, Irish, 91, 296
- Peroration, 124-127, 283, 301
- Philip II, 88, 296
- Pitt, the elder, see Chatham; the younger, 22, 37
- Platform, 44
- Plato, 97
- Poles, 65
- Polity*, 82, 295
- Politics, 69, 292
- Popular*, 63, 69, 291
- Population, 49, 72-74, 96
- Posita luditur*, 122, 301
- Prime minister, 12
- Privileges, 79, 127; see Freedom
- Profane*, 126, 302
- Project (North's), 35, 47, 48, 116, 288
- Protestants, 63, 291
- Pruriency*, 46, 288
- Prussia, 3, 5, 29, 125
- Public tribunal, 43, 287
- Putnam, 29
- Quakers, 22
- Quebec, 29, 31
- Questions, two capital, 48
- Quod felix*, 127, 302
- Radical*, 72, 293
- Raleigh, 78, 294
- Ransom, 116, 123; see Auction
- Rebellion in America, 35, 43, 79, 80, 96, 195, 206, 216, 265, 271, 287
- Rebellion, "Great," 11
- Reconciliation, see Conciliation
- Refined policy, 46, 288
- Refractory colonies, 118
- Refusal, 121
- Religion, 63, 75, 90, 95, 208
- Repeal of penal acts, 107-111, 254, 299
- Representation, 62, 63, 93, 94, 96, 97, 98-101, 111, 291, 295, 297, 298
- Republic*, 97, 297
- Requisition, 106
- Resolutions, Burke's, 98-111, 298
- Restraint, 29, 41, 74, 286
- Returning officer, 109, 299
- Revenue laws, 86, 121, 127, 178, 296
- Revenue by grant, by imposition, 106; see Grants of Money, Imposition
- Revolution, American, 36, 37, 38; see extracts from Trevelyan, 129-145, Fox's speeches, *Letter to Sheriffs*
- Revolution, English, 11, 12, 90, 225
- Revolution, French, 28, 37
- Rhode Island, 103, 109
- Rice, 57
- Richard II, 94
- Richmond, Duke of, 133, 277

- Rights, abstract, 80, 295; see Theories; English, see Freedom
- Robinson, 151-153
- Rockingham, 24, 31, 166, 183, 230, 273
- Rodman, 38
- Roman charity*, 57, 290
- Run the longitude, 58, 290
- St. Stephen's, 284
- Sandwich, 141, 147, 149
- Serbonian bog*, 83
- Serpent, 57, 290
- Session, Burke's first, 212, 213, 182-185
- Session, "the present," 43, 287
- Seven Years' War, 10, 13, 29
- Simplicity, 46
- Simul alba*, 93, 296
- Sir, 285; see Norton
- Sixth of George II, 101, 298
- Slavery, arguing or forcing Americans into, 75, 79, 125, 190, 245
- Slaves, negro, in America, 49, 52, 65, 76, 77, 289
- Slaves, make haughty, 114, 300
- Smyrna, 68
- Sophistry, 114
- Spain, 68, 88, 125, 149, 254, 296
- Spare it altogether, 121, 301
- Speed*, 123, 301
- Spirit of liberty, 10, 58, 61, 68, 72, 77, 81
- Spoliatis arma*, 75, 294
- Stamp Act, 24, 31, 101, 182-191, 211, 248, 286, 288, 295
- State*, 105, 299
- Stuarts, 11, 12, 95, 150, 156, 166, 284
- Sublime and Beautiful*, 22
- Submission, 47, 70, 271, 275, 286, 288, 295
- Subsidies, 99, 103
- Sultan, 68
- Superstition, 41, 95, 286
- Sursum corda*, 127, 302
- Table, 123
- Tartars, English, 73
- Taxable objects, 124, 301
- Taxation, 29-32, 35, 36, 82, 84-87, 94, 95, 98-101, 104-107, 112-114, 117-120, 124, 218, 244, 249, 291, 295, 297, 299
- Taxation of Americans by themselves, 105, 124, 250, 299
- Taxation by grant, 98, 297
- Taxation a test of liberty, 61-62
- Taxation in Ireland, 90
- Tea, 32, 34, 177
- Tea Party, 35, 294
- Temper and character, 60-68
- Temple of Peace, Concord, 98, 100, 111, 125, 127, 302
- Theories, Burke's dislike for mere, 27, 45, 49, 60, 80, 88,

- 97, 100, 107, 113, 116, 189, 288, 295; see *Metaphysical Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, extracts, 218-236; referred to, 6, 16, 303
- Tobacco, 119, 301
- Touched and grieved, 94, 99, 100, 298
- Townshend, 32, 34, 163, 303
- Trade, see *Commerce*
- Trade laws, 29, 85-87, 250, 293
- Traitors, see *Trials in England*
- Treason, see *Trials in England*
- Trevelyan, extracts, 129-155, 237-242; cited, 303
- Trials for treason in England, 33, 92, 108, 109, 120, 171, 194
- Truck and huckster*, 68, 292
- Tucker, 293, 296
- Turk, 67
- Understood principle, 84, 295, 297
- Unity of Empire, 115, 120, 125, 300
- Unsuspecting confidence, 3, 11, 46, 84, 172, 178, 212, 213, 288
- Utopia*, 97
- Virginia, 65, 76, 77, 118, 119, 187
- Virtually represented, 96
- Wales, 91-93, 115, 296
- Walpole, Horace, 25, 131, 146, 239
- Walpole, Robert, 12, 13, 15, 16, 30
- Washington, 9, 26, 28, 29
- Webster, 28
- Wedderburn, 146, 303
- West Indian, 52
- Westminster, 284
- Wilkes, John, 28
- Wilkes, Lord Mayor, 274
- Will not miscall, 43, 287
- William of Orange, 12
- Wind of doctrine, 42
- Winged ministers, 67, 292
- Worse qualified, 44
- Worthy member, 43, 169, 287
- Ye gods, annihilate, 77









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